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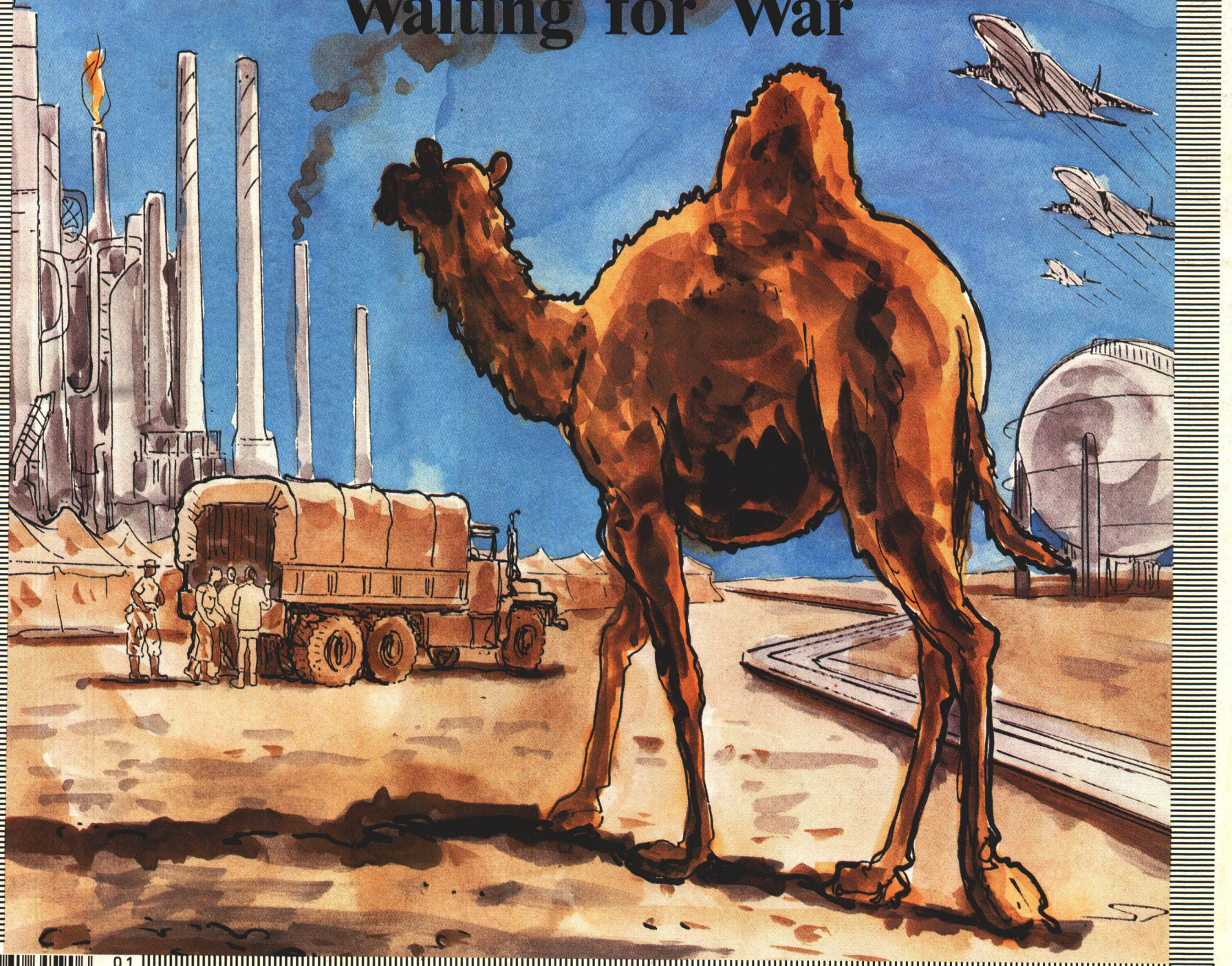
Fred Barnes • Charlotte Allen • Thomas Mallon

Micah Morrison in Saudi Arabia

Waiting for War



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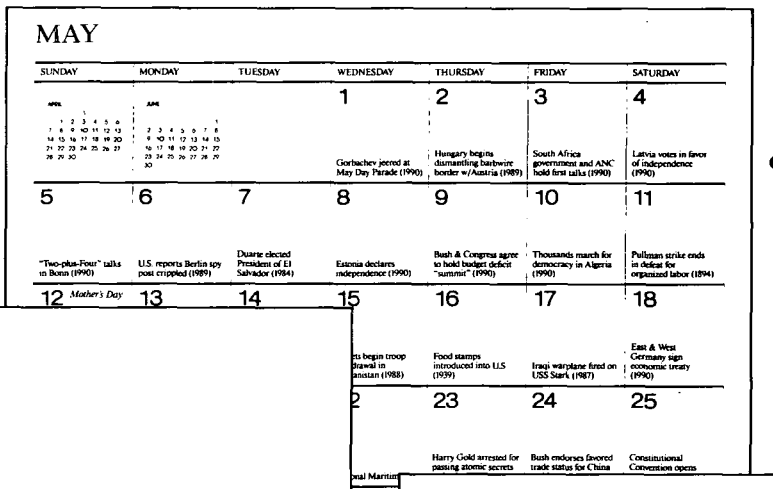

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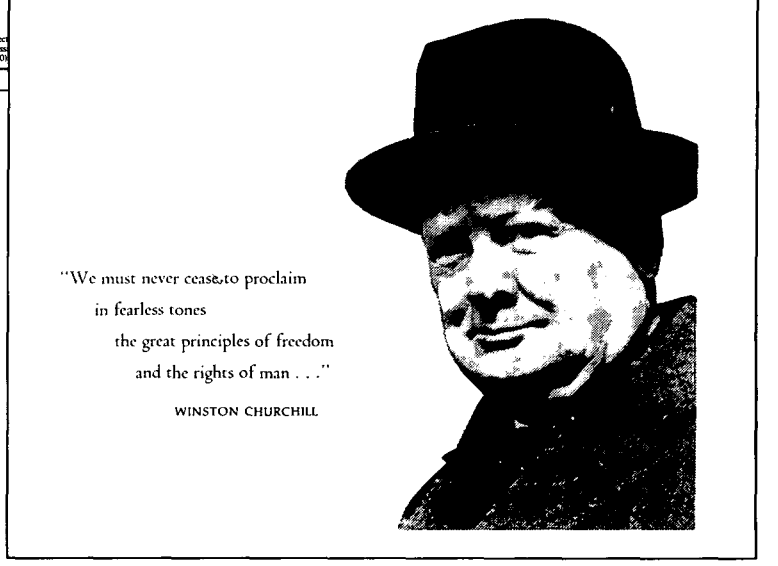
Ronald Reagan
June 1982



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Hussein and Arafat – Birds of a Feather

How they engineered the bloody events in Jerusalem

On Monday, October 8,1990, on the Jewish festival of Succoth, about 20,000 Jews assembled for prayer at the Western Wall in Jerusalem, the holiest place in the Jewish religion. Two mosques are also located on Temple Mount, high above the Wall. Because of the indulgence and respect for other religions, the Israeli authorities allow them to operate freely and fully under the jurisdiction of Moslem religious authorities. Suddenly and without any provocation, whipped into a frenzy by their clerics, a raging mob of 4,000 Moslem Arabs stormed out of the mosques and loosed a barrage of rocks, bricks, and Molotov cocktails on the worshipping crowd below them. Twenty-eight people were severely injured. By miracle, nobody was killed. The mob then attacked the Israeli police post and set it afire. The police responded, first with tear gas and then rubber bullets. When those ran out and when 40 police were at the point of being lynched they opened fire with live ammunition. Twenty Arabs died and twenty martyrs had been created.

What are the facts?

■ There is no question in anybody's mind that the bloody incident was engineered and organized by Saddam Hussein, the "Butcher of Baghdad", and Yasser Arafat, the master terrorist and "president" of the non-existent state of "Palestine'. After virtually every Arab leader has turned against Hussein, Yasser Arafat remains steadfastly loyal to him. And why not? Both have the destruction of Israel at the very top of their agendas -- in fact Arafat has no other agenda; he surely doesn't care at all about the fate of Kuwait. The bloody incident on the Temple Mount served the purposes of both. They rightly expected that it would take, at least temporarily, the heat and the focus off Saddam Hussein and had the potential to weaken the tenuous common front between the United States and our new-found Arab "allies". As to Arafat, the incident was certain to put the "Palestinian problem", which because of the troubles in the Gulf had taken a back seat, once again into the spotlight. That twenty Palestinian Arabs had died was a small price to pay, because human life is cheap for both Hussein and Arafat. Naturally, they had hoped that a few hundred Jews would also die in that fusillade of rocks. But, by great good fortune, that turned out not to be.

Birds of a Feather: Saddam Hussein and Yasser Arafat, two enemies of the U.S. in loving embrace.

■ One of Saddam Hussein's and Yasser Arafat's main themes is the linkage of any possible withdrawal from Kuwait with a demand for Israeli withdrawal from the "West Bank". This is a ludicrous proposal and, so far at least, most of the Western world has called it just that. If the world's minorities problems must be solved, why not address the "Irish question", which has been festering for centuries? Why not settle the age-old grievances of the Basques, those of the ethnic Albanians in Yugoslavia and, closest to home and right in Iraq, the justified despair of the Kurds, whose aspirations Saddam Hussein "solves" by poison gassing thousands, and by forcefully relocating the rest? Iraq has annexed Kuwait in an act of aggression motivated by greed. Israel came to administer (not to annex!) the "West Bank" and the Gaza strip as the result of its victory in the Six-Day War. Israel has always been ready to negotiate the ultimate status of these territories. It promised to do so in the Camp David Accords as the result of which it also returned the vast Sinai Peninsula to Egypt.

By his actions and by his statements, Yasser Arafat has clearly demonstrated that he is a bird of the same feather as Saddam Hussein. Arafat's immediate ambition is to shift the focus of interest from the Gulf to Israel, in order to gloss over the crimes of Hussein, to change the conflict of the World vs. Iraq into the conflict of the Arabs vs. Israel, and thus to break up the fragile coalition between the United States and its Arab "allies". The recent bloody incidents in Jerusalem were clearly provoked for that purpose by Arafat and the PLO, in connivance with Saddam Hussein. Regrettably, the United States in great haste, without even ascertaining the facts, and in order to curry favor with our new Arab "allies" (among them the murderous Syrians), introduced a resolution into the Security Council of the United Nations that condemned Israel's actions.

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The elections of 1990 have weakened Republicans, but less than they had feared. Voters have given President Bush a four-issue agenda he would be wise to follow if he hopes to win them over in 1992.

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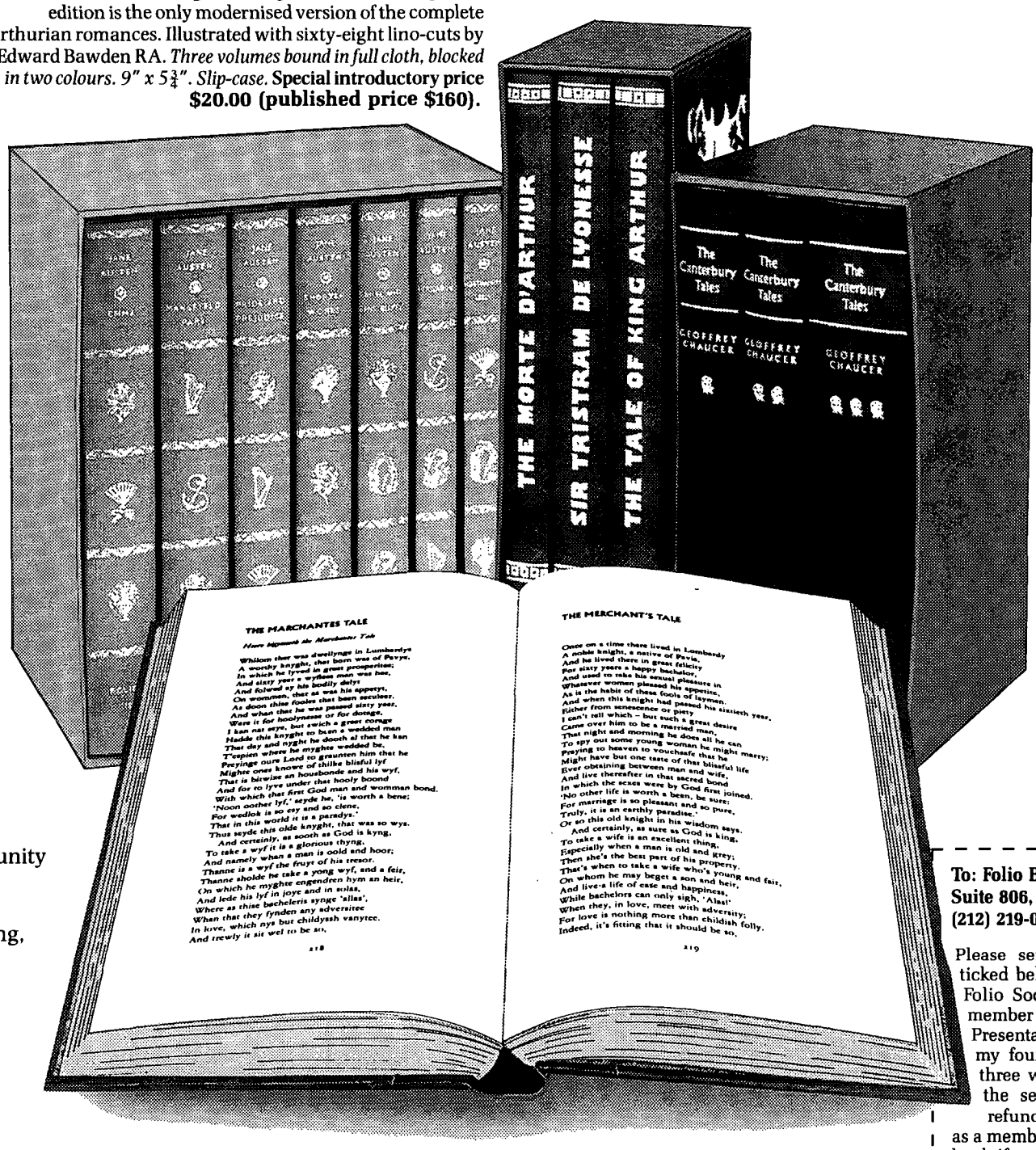

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THE CONTINUING CRISIS

• November was a cruel month. Before it was over the Conservative party of Great Britain had shunted aside the longest-serving prime minister in more than 160 years and one of the most creditable. Meanwhile, in the American mid-term election 36.4 percent of the electorate returned to power 96 percent of the most deficient Congress since the days of the carpetbaggers and the scalawags. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher acceded to what seemed to be the wishes of her Tory colleagues, defiant but of good cheer: "It is rather a funny old world," she observed in apprising her cabinet of her forthcoming resignation. The fatuous and remarkably corrupt members of the American Congress who had just hollered for tax increases on the eve of recession immediately began filing caveats about our stance in the Middle East, though many of them could not find the area on a map. Under the leadership of one of their most obtuse colleagues, the Hon. Ron Dellums (D-Calif.), forty-five congressmen filed suit in U.S. Federal District Court in Washington, D.C., to bar the President from waging war against Mr. Saddam Hussein. Former Senator George McGovern filed for bankruptcy. Hearings began before the Senate Ethics Committee on the Keating Five.

• Two British birdwatchers, Mr. Michael Entwhistle and Mr. Timothy Andrews, have been declared the victims of Peruvian bandits, who apparently prey on birdwatchers in the jungles north of Lima, steal their wicker baskets and khaki shorts, and smash their glasses. Former President Jimmy Carter has attacked another American President, though this time he did not journey to London or Tokyo to assail his successor. Rather he fell on President George H. W. Bush at a scholarly conference on the Carter presidency held at Hofstra University, where his shrieks successfully deflected attention from the depressing subject matter at hand. If the American army goes into action against Mr. Saddam Hussein's dysentery-ridden troops, Mr. Carter predicts a "massive, self-destructive, almost suicidal war." The ombrophilous twit added, "If we do launch an attack . . . we will reap great and very serious deleterious consequences politically." He suggested that the United States give Iraq a Kuwaiti island or two, a chivalrous *démarche* seconded by Gov. Mario Cuomo at a Fresno, California, summit. On November 26, the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council agreed in principle to expel Iraq from Kuwait by force.

• Buckingham Palace refused comment on reports that the Prince of Wales had visited "Avalon" in Glastonbury, Somerset, seeking a preternatural remedy for his shattered arm. Ever since 1582, when the astrologer Dr. John Dee pronounced the waters of the Avalon well therapeutic, the afflicted have visited the place to sip its earthy-tasting water. We do know that late in October the Prince stopped by and sipped the earthy-tasting water, but the Palace remains mum as to his objective. Workers at the Merita Bread Works in Greensboro, North Carolina, have been quietly notified as to the cause of their earthy-tasting coffee. The coffee tasted fine until about four months ago when it developed this earthy taste. The distraught workers changed their coffee brand and even purchased a new coffee machine, but the earthy taste remained until police arrested a deliveryman, Mr. Dale David Tinstman, 46. County Magistrate William Hohenwarter explained: "This guy has been urinating into the well of the coffee machine." Now Mr. Tinstman has been charged with four counts of adulteration of food with intent to cause serious injury, though he could beat the "serious injury" charge if he proves to the satisfaction of the judge that he is a member of one of the many Hindu urine cults now spreading across the United States from the offices of Mr. Donald Kennedy, president of Stanford University.

• Mr. Eric Bristow, former world darts champion, was charged with public intoxication in London, and the National Football League reinstated former Washington Redskin defensive end Mr. Dexter Manley, reversing its lifetime banishment of him on drug charges. Discord is menacing the campus of Harvard University, where, in response to militant homosexuals' use of pink triangles to symbolize the wholesome side of sodomy, a group espousing traditional values is covering the campus with blue squares. "We see this both as an attack on gays and on this symbol," said Miss Sheila Allen, the very pretty if somewhat agelastic leader of the Bisexual, Gay and Lesbian Students Association. According to the *New York Times*, "homosexuals are becoming increasingly visible and active at Harvard. . . . All residence halls now have tutors who can counsel students on issues of homosexuality," such as how to respond at the Yale-Harvard football game when the good-looking center hikes the ball between his legs to an equally good-looking quarterback. A row between a Japanese condom-manufacturer and anti-AIDS activists in Philadelphia has sadly diminished the world's image of the Japanese male. The activists are protesting Philadelphia's decision to distribute two million Japanese-made sheaths to he-man Philadelphians, because the activists have found the sheaths tight and otherwise unequal to the rigors of local sexual practices.

• Rock connoisseurs who for many years have complained that Mr. Pete Townshend, guitarist for The Who, sang as though he had a pillow in his mouth received unanticipated vindication from a published interview wherein the muzziheaded *artiste* admits to sundry homosexual accouplements. "I know how it feels to be a woman," Mr. Townshend attests in a wonderful new book, *Rock Lives: Profiles and Interviews*, edited by Mr. Timothy White, and doubtless published by some illustrious university press—Stanford University is a good bet. In London, Sergeant Mark Nurthen, 32, has begun libel action against a newspaper for a story that made the tall, virile policeman out to be, in the carefully chosen words of his lawyer, "a nerd and a plonker." The offending portrayal appeared in the *People*'s report on Sergeant Nurthen's rather thrilling raid on a joke shop that sold "chocolate willies" and even "wind-up hopping willies."

• Mr. Malcolm Muggeridge became an angel on November 14, and now the laughter that he brought to this magazine and to millions of willing and unwilling ears around the world will be heard elsewhere. He died in Sussex at the age of 87. Also among the month's casualties was Mr. Laurence Durrell, 78, author of the *Alexandria Quartet*, this on the heels of the passing in late October of former Attorney General William French Smith, 78, Mr. Joel McCrea, 84, one of Hollywood's wisest investors and richest actors, Sr. Xavier Cugat, 90, the "Rumba King," and Elliott Roosevelt, 80, long-time son of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. On November 5, Rabbi Meir Kahane was shot dead in Manhattan after delivering a speech to the Zionist Emergency Evacuation Rescue Organization. He was 57. Seventy-two-year-old Mr. John Anderson, of Reseda, California, may never drive again. On November 6, Mr. Anderson ruined an unblemished driving record that stretches back to 1948 when his automobile went berserk as he idled it in front of the Canoga Park Department of Motor Vehicles office while waiting to take his driving test. The beast veered off in a great arc, crashing through a wall and into the DMV of-

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fice where it came to rest beneath an eye exam chart and a sign reading "Report Here for Drive Test." Mr. Anderson was not cited for any driving violation and none of the eighty employees or customers in the building were mortally injured.

• The *Wall Street Journal* reported that the Rev. Martin Luther King Bidenized vast stretches of his doctoral dissertation from the work of Mr. Jack Boozer—a startling report that, but one that originally appeared in the London *Sunday Telegraph*'s December 3 1989, edition. Apparently, not many American journalists can read English, so the *Telegraph* story went unreported in America; in fact, it still goes unreported, for according to it the Rev. King also Bidenized in books and sermons. Norwegian architecture suffered a blow when Mr. Jermund Skogstad stepped out of his newly rented Oslo apartment for a sandwich. When he tried to return home he noticed that he had forgotten his address, and so standardized is the government-subsidized housing of Oslo that Mr. Skogstad has not been able to find his way back to the apartment for over a month. He is conducting his campaign to locate the dwelling from a hotel, but no one knows when his flat will turn up. Mr. William Bennett resigned as drug czar to lead the Republican National Committee, and somewhere over Latin America, Mr. Frank Mackey, the Argentine fashion designer who has become the preeminent practitioner of that art in Brazil, became unhinged by a lovers' tiff and rampaged through a commercial airline, hurling ice cream at passengers, voiding in the aisle of the first-class section, and stripping to his shorts. Cocaine was found in a hangar at the Kennedy Space Center, and on November 18, thirty-four nations signed an East-West disarmament treaty in Paris, ending the Cold War, the Nuclear Nightmare, McCarthyism, Ground Zero, the Military-Industrial Complex, and dozens of other bugaboos that have given meaning to the lives of our otherwise meaningless progressives. The Crisis will not, however, end.

—RET

CORRESPONDENCE

Salamizdat

In the course of reading Cathy Young's excellent article in the November issue ("Suicide Solution," Soviet Presswatch), I was suddenly transported back in time about sixty years. What triggered this flashback was her story about the right Russian way to eat salami.

Again a kid of seven, I was listening at dinner in our Brooklyn apartment to my father, who had just been fired, tell the family how we would have to cut back on expenses, including food. "It won't be too bad," he reassured us. "We never be down to 'potatoes and point.'"

He explained that in hard times (before the potato famine brought disaster), Irish families would hang a dried, salted herring on a string in the middle of the table and "point" their potatoes at it for flavor.

How this legendary feast got to Russia I leave to cultural anthropologists, but at least salami would provide a potato with more tasteful emanations than salt herring.

—John P. Roche
The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy
Medford, Massachusetts

Get Back

I've noticed that since you left the Hoosier state, it's gone lulu for Demos. And you haven't exactly improved things in your new neighborhood either. Maybe you all should pack up and return home?

—Tim Ferguson
Hermosa Beach, California

Some Say Over the Rainbow

I read with interest the article by David Brock on the Rainbow Lobby in your November 1990 issue ("The Rainbow Lobby Storms Congress"). I was most interested by the quote attributed to me, especially since I do not know David Brock nor have I ever been interviewed by him.

Because I am not an authority on the Rainbow Lobby, the New Alliance party, or any other of their incarnations, I would not consent to do an interview because I have nothing of any value to say for the record.

Moreover, under no circumstances have I ever or would I ever identify the Angola Peace Fund (APF) as being "pro-Savimbi." We are a non-partisan group which has always advocated direct peace talks between Angola's warring parties, a lasting cease-fire, and free elections. Nothing I have ever said nor nothing [sic] we have ever written could lead any honest observer to describe APF as supporters of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) or Jonas Savimbi, its leader.

While I doubt that the Rainbow Lobby has extensive contact with congressional aides, it is not and has never been my style to refer to them or anyone else as "political commissars." In fact, the last time I even used the word commissar was in reference to the song "Der Kommissar" by the Austrian singer Falco.

I urge you to correct this matter as soon as possible as both the characterization of APF and the quote attributed to me do not accurately reflect the truth.

—Gregory B. Simpkins
Communications Director
Angola Peace Fund
Washington, D.C.

David Brock replies:

As evidenced by my decision to use a quote from my interview with Mr. Simpkins (by telephone, on September 11, according to my notes), he did in fact have something of value to say about the Rainbow Lobby's "tactics of intimidation." It is regrettable that he now finds it necessary to disclaim not only the quote but the entire interview. Could it be that he has fallen victim to the same tactics?

I was prompted by the editors of the piece to insert the "pro-Savimbi" description. From the fact that I was referred to Mr. Simpkins by a pro-Savimbi lobbyist at Black, Manafort and Stone, I mistakenly inferred that the Angola Peace Fund shared the same view.

New Friends and Enemies

I like to think of myself (along with author Robert Anton Wilson) as being perpendicular to the left-right politcal spectrum, and so I read your magazine and the *Nation*. I have reached the conclusion that in spite of their excellent crossword puzzle, and Calvin Trillin, you guys are much more fun.

I loved P. J. O'Rourke's article "Shoot the Wounded" (*TAS*, November 1990). But *what a list*! Don't you people like anybody? Some women have too many names, some pop singers don't have enough . . . Lighten up! Or somebody might confuse you with the left—complain, complain, complain. This being said, I (of course) have a few entries of my own:

1. Anyone with a "knee-jerk" political reflex, left or right.
2. Anyone who confuses his/her pet dogma with fact, and then gets mad if you aren't similarly confused.

I would also like to take this opportunity to launch my own modest crusade: to have the words "In God We Trust" removed from the currency, and replaced with the motto "Mind Your Own Business," which I think is much more in keeping with the principles this nation was founded on. Wish me luck.

—Charles E. Chace
Williamstown, Massachusetts

To your laudable Enemies List I'd like to nominate the following institution, where I am completing my third and final year as an inmate (I plead self-defense):

Georgetown University Law Center (i.e., law school with underground parking), whose administration and faculty include: Profs. Seidman and Tusnet, co-authors of a widely used constitutional law text that reads like James Madison on veterinary pharmaceuticals; Prof. Eleanor Holmes Norton, Carterite EOC Chair and current representation-without-taxation Democratic nominee for D.C. Congressional Delegate; Prof./Fr. Robert Drinan, formerly a Massachusetts Democratic congressman and still a Jesuit-lawyer-human-rights-activist-Brennan crony (you want more?); Prof. Sam "Special Prosecutor" Dash (on second thought, for a guy who prosecuted Nixon and defended Hoffa, Prof. Sam's a pretty good ol' boy); and our reigning dean, Judith Areen, who was, no kidding, one of Nader's original raiders.

And all this on a semi-cozy campus within spitting distance of the House of Congress.

—Steven "Doc" Rudd, M.D.
Arlington, Virginia
(formerly, by God, of Alabama)

I've just finished reading the latest installment of P. J. O'Rourke's New Enemies List in the November *TAS*. It was, as I expected, wickedly entertaining.

It occurred to me that as the names of the more obvious individuals are almost used up, informants are more and more turning in the names of organizations—both the formally structured (e.g., the ACLU), and the informally structured (e.g., animal rights activists or owners of certain bumper stickers).

What this suggests to me is the opportunity to create a parallel operation modeled after the Attorney General's List of Subversive Organizations (which, so far as I know, has not been kept up to date, and contains nothing more than the congressional roster).

Think of it, though! With such a list certified and published in *TAS*, those of us who have a little free time, and

(continued on page 48)

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EDITORIALS

YOU MUST REMEMBER HISS

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

What is Alger Hiss going to do about a new and unforeseen trend in publishing? For many years there has been a lusty market for spy novels. Now it appears that there is a sizable market for spy confessions. Former Communist intelligence agents such as KGB defector Oleg A. Gordievsky and former Communist statesman Nikita S. Khrushchev have written books revealing the names of Americans who spied for the Soviet Union. Alger Hiss was convicted in 1950 of perjury for denying that he had spied for the Soviet Union in the 1930s when he was in several high-level government positions. Ever since, he has claimed that he was framed by such legendary anti-Communists as Richard Nixon and Whittaker Chambers. Scholarly books have appeared establishing that Hiss spied, but Hiss has insisted he was but one of the many Americans victimized by McCarthyism and the American hysteria about Communism.

Through the years, Hiss has had many admirers in progressive circles who also share his belief that the American government, goaded by the likes of J. Edgar Hoover and A. Mitchell Palmer, indulged in "Red Scares" just for the fun of it or because Americans were never quite mature about the spread of totalitarianism. In fact one of the many enormities we Americans have allegedly been guilty of is the Red Scare, or Communist Witch Hunt, that led to hounding New Dealers such as the blameless Lauchlin Currie from office. Ethel and Julius Rosenberg were actually executed in June of 1953 for conspiring to pass American atomic bomb secrets to the Soviet Union, though they protested their innocence to the end. Plays and movies devoted to exposing our unwarranted concern with domestic Communism have been very profitably produced in this country, and one of the staples of many college courses in American history has been that good citizens were ruined for life by our anti-Communist hysteria.

Now comes the third volume of Khrushchev's memoirs, wherein the great man speaks of the Rosenbergs. "I'll share a secret with you. We got assistance from some good people who helped us master the production of nuclear energy faster than we would have otherwise, and who helped us produce our first atomic bomb. . . . I was part of Stalin's circle when he mentioned the Rosenbergs with warmth. I cannot specifically say what kind of help they gave us, but I heard from both Stalin and Molotov, then minister of foreign affairs, that the Rosenbergs provided help in accelerating the production of our atomic bomb." And in his new book, *KGB: The Inside Story of Its Operation From Lenin to Gorbachev*,[1] Gordievsky, the Soviet Union's top spy in London from 1982 to his defection in 1985, confirms the suspicions of many students of Soviet espionage when he declares that Lauchlin Currie and Harry Dexter White were both Soviet spies. Currie was an administrative assistant to Franklin Roosevelt and White served in Roosevelt's Treasury Department. The latter is dead, but the former is very much alive and living in Colombia.

Doubtless there are going to follow still more spy confessions. The revelations of Khrushchev and Gordievsky are admittedly shaky. Khrushchev was a notorious liar who laid down no less than three different stories as to how Lavrenty Beria, the head of Stalin's secret police, was killed. Gordievsky's sources are questionable and his claim that FDR's personal confidant Harry Hopkins was "the most important of all Soviet wartime agents in the United States" is sensationalist claptrap. But the revelations in these books will encourage more reliable accounts of illicit liaisons between Soviet intelligence agents and disloyal Americans. Moreover, there must be plenty of reliable information in the recently liberated archives of the Czech intelligence agency. It was through Czechoslovakia that many who spied for the Soviets fled when they feared exposure.

I just wonder how old Alger Hiss is taking all this. In many ways he was the paradigmatic leftist ideologue of our times. Simply stick to your story despite all the evidence to the contrary accumulating around you. Care not what reality might suggest. Fear not what a conviction on perjury charges implies. Be assured that you will have the support of all progressives and you will achieve the added goal of discrediting the authority of a democratic government.

Hiss still has the progressives' support. In reading *Time*'s excerpts of the Gordievsky book, one finds a number of references to Hiss as a spy. Yet the rest of the American press has been negligent in reporting this major news story. James Bamford's review of the Gordievsky book in the *New York Times Book Review* last November, for example, mentions Hiss not once. How long will Hiss's luck hold out before his fellow countrymen discover that our postwar concern about Communist espionage in our government was warranted? □

Adapted from RET's weekly Washington Post *column syndicated by King Features.*

[1]HarperCollins, $29.95.

DEMOCRATS TO THE RESCUE

It appears that my campaign prediction of last month was fla fla. I pronounced that President Bush was "headed for a terrible mid-term defeat." Ever the good sport, he had abjured his promise of no new taxes so that the Democrats would play ball with him in cutting the federal deficit. He smacked us all with a tax increase, and the unsportsmanlike Democrats slyly stiffed him with budget cuts (meager and mostly illusory), increased federal spending in the neighborhood of $100 billion (an increase twice the anticipated rate of inflation), and a federal deficit that is going to swell faster and larger than before the President's sporting gesture.

Anyone familiar with previous budget debaucheries knew that an increase in taxes would free the Democratic libido for spending. Equally portentous, by breaking his pledge of "no new taxes" President Bush denied himself and his party their most appealing virtue, namely, serving as the taxpayers' stalwart defense against government's spendthrifts. I suppose when I made my prediction President Bush was indeed headed for a fall; all that saved him were the Democrats who learned nothing from the 1980s and those Republicans who did. These are the rebels who stood by their vow to keep taxes down—the only Republican governorships lost were lost by Republicans who let taxes rise.

Now in the *Washington Post* Stuart E. Eizenstat comes forward and notes that President Bush suffered no defeat at all. Despite "a looming recession, sagging consumer confidence, an open breach between congressional Republicans and their president . . . and more

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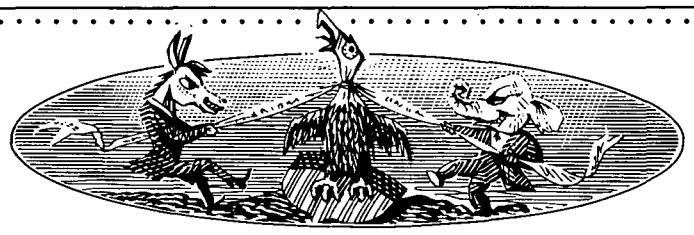
Senate Republican than Democratic seats at risk," Eizenstat reminds us that the Democrats' modest gains were "far short of the average post-World War II gain in non-presidential elections by the party not in the White House. . . . Nor were the Republicans at a historically low base for a minority party in the House but were right at the post-World War II average." And he bids his fellow Democrats to reflect again on their fragmented and radicalized condition, a condition that puts them out of sympathy with "middle class Americans who work hard, pay their taxes, worry about crime and drugs, want a decent home, send their sons to fight our wars, struggle to educate their children and wonder how they will care for their parents in old age."

That is the polite way of saying the Democratic party has taken aboard too many zanies. Its leaders remain in thrall to the kind of fanatics that New Dealers avoided and that Liberals booted from the party in the late 1940s. The New Deal dealt in palpable things: jobs, income security, a planned economy, a planned society, urban planning. Now the party ministers to *feelings*, to the insecure feelings of feminists, racial and ethnic militants, homosexuals—almost anyone with a gripe. The interest-group politics of its past have been replaced by mass acts of psychotherapy to make the grumpy feel good about themselves. Yesteryear's Democratic leader promised jobs. Governor Mario Cuomo promises a sense of well-being, of "empowerment," of equality. Against divided opponents, one of whom was a professional clown, he could corral only 53 percent of the vote—and that in the Democratic bastion of New York.

Not surprisingly this angry man is a frontrunner for the Democratic presidential nomination, along with Jesse Jackson and Congressman Richard Gephardt, who himself just squeaked through his mid-term trial despite all the leverage of incumbency. Ever since the McGovernites took over the national Democratic party, reforming it into a facsimile of Greenwich Village, the Democrats' presidential nomination process has been an ignominious experience for the normal American pol. All the nutcases have to be mollified. Weird issues have to be adopted. Issues popular with the American mainstream have to be shunned. Positioning himself in the recent elections for an eventual run at the Democratic nomination, New Jersey's Senator Bill Bradley shunned his role as a pro-growth, anti-tax Democrat. The Democratic leadership viewed him with new hope. The electorate came close to retiring him.

No, President Bush did not suffer "a terrible mid-term defeat." My prediction was based on an elementary error. I overlooked his Democratic opponents. □

CAPITOL IDEAS



POLITICS MISCONSTRUED

by Tom Bethell

For Republicans, the political landscape does not look very promising following the midterm elections. The claim that the number of House seats lost was below average for the party holding the presidency is not persuasive. Consider the small number of House seats the GOP held in the first place. Democrats were already at their highest level at midterm elections during a Republican presidency in this century.

The problem is that in his domestic policies President Bush has emerged as the supporter of big government, whether wittingly or unwittingly it does not really matter, and has thereby inflicted great damage on the party. In his inept handling of Iraq's seizure of Kuwait—he has sometimes responded as though he took Saddam Hussein's actions personally—Bush has no doubt also inflicted political damage on himself.

Repeatedly we were told that the voters were in a mean and restless mood this year, eager to turn the rascals out, but when the votes were counted the percentage of rascals returned to Washington was as high as ever. The result suggests that something may be wrong with the normal explanation—that campaign funds, paid staff, and mailing privileges give incumbents high name recognition and therefore a big advantage. If incumbents were truly unpopular, it is reasonable to suppose that their very familiarity to voters would work against them. Voters would be inclined to vote against the local scoundrels they knew only too well and opt for less well-known challengers. But that now happens only very rarely.

Something else seems to be at work, and the institutional structure of Congress suggests what it is. The principal activity of Congress is redistributing about one trillion of our hard-earned dollars. This huge sum resides in a "common pool," to which 535 legislators enjoy siphoning privileges. They are not restricted by the requirement that they limit themselves to the amount that has been diverted to Washington by taxation. They are restricted only by the rule that they must team up with colleagues to form majorities. (You join me on a bill to benefit my constituents, then I'll do the same for you.)

The key feature of this arrangement is that the fiscally conservative legislator who refuses to join in the general logrolling succeeds in hurting his own constituents but does not thereby reduce the budget deficit or contribute to the nation's economic well-being. He merely leaves more for all the others, who are less shy about dipping into the common pool.

Another way of putting it is to say that if you are pondering your vote for your local congressman, and you notice that there are already 534 thieves in Washington, you will probably conclude that your best bet is to send your own thief to join all the others, if you are to have any hope of sharing in the benefits from the common pool. Voters therefore rationally support their own congressmen—provided they join in the general logrolling, which almost all do. But the electorate will also seek to restrain the growth of the overall common pool, or budget. This task cannot be performed by any single legislator—only by a President who promises to veto spending bills and pledges "no new taxes." At the margin, therefore, a significant number of people are likely to vote for a fiscally conservative Republican as President and for a big-spending Democrat to represent them at the common trough that is Congress. This, of course, is a formula for divided government, and it is what we have mostly had in recent decades.

The pattern is now being repeated in state legislatures as well, notably California's. Of course, the division between legislature and executive does not have to be by party. If a Republican chief executive is perceived as weak or ineffective or downright misguided on restraining the size of the common pool—in short, if he supports tax increases—the voters will predictably turn against him or throw him out. This is no doubt what happened to the inept Gov. Bob Martinez of Florida, who supported a state tax on services, having been told by Democrats and the news media that this was the "responsible" thing to do. In California, the press is already urging Governor-elect Pete Wilson to face reality, recognize the magnitude of the state's budget shortfall, and do the responsible thing by forgetting his campaign rhetoric and supporting an increase in you-know-what. The same pressure was brought to bear on Gov. George Deukmejian in 1983, but he wisely resisted and won re-election easily in 1986. Gov. Jim Florio of New Jersey is an unusual case: he raised taxes without external pressure, out of ideological conviction.

In short, a President or governor who misconstrues his role and haplessly collaborates with greedy legislators will soon find himself in political trouble. This is exactly what Bush did. He thought his job was to come to an agreement with Congress when he should have opposed them all the way. He wanted to be numbered among the

Tom Bethell is The American Spectator*'s Washington correspondent.*

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Good and the Compassionate. A bad mistake. Presumably he had not come across this common-pool analysis before, and only now that he has read this article will he realize the error of his ways. President Reagan's "skinflint" image, although by no means justified, nonetheless served him very well. Bush seems to have been under the impression that Reagan was hurt by this image. As President, then, he would be kinder and gentler.

The common-pool theory also predicts that voters will tend to support term limitations. Such constraints enable the electorate both to vote for their familiar local figure and to serve notice on all the others, who represent other constituencies. This is what has happened in Colorado, California, and Oklahoma. The trend toward term limits should now spread across the country. (But as James Hammit of the Rand Corporation pointed out in a letter to the *Los Angeles Times*, Colorado's vote to restrict the terms of its congressional delegation was perverse, because of the role that seniority plays in legislative power. "The longer a legislator remains in power, the greater his ability to direct resources from the common government pool to his own jurisdiction's benefit." The Colorado vote ensures that the state's representatives "will be perennially junior to those from other states. If the limit remains, we can expect Colorado to receive a diminishing share of the common pool.")

Bush, of course, was not up for reelection, but we should expect voter backlash against the party whose leader mistook his role and became the raider, rather than the custodian, of the voters' pocketbooks. Bush's only hope now is to recapture the guardian role, and this is what he has already tried to do. He had "serious regrets" about "being forced" to abandon his no-new-taxes pledge, he said two days after the election, and if Congress tries to do it again, "they're going to do it over my dead veto, or live veto, or something like that, because it ain't going to happen, I'll guarantee you."

Andrew Rosenthal of the *New York Times* politely noted that Bush's "vehement assurances that he would fight any income tax increases carried some of the air of political uncertainty that led to his decision to give his blessing to a tax increase" earlier in the year. "Can I make a promise I won't support them?" Bush asked. "Absolutely. You know, sometimes you run into some realities. But I'm girding up my loins to beat back the tax attempts that I think are coming. Because I think the American people are fed up with it." Right, but what if the congressional leaders once again tell him that the need for new revenues is a matter of "reality"?

What we are dealing with, I'm afraid, is a President who doesn't understand politics. Yes, he was elected to the highest office, and such a person, one feels, *must* have good political instincts. But I don't think Bush does. In effect, he was Reagan's nominated successor, but it is clear now that he never understood the sources of Reagan's appeal. Bush's poor political instincts are also much in evidence in his handling of the conflict in the Persian Gulf.

He cannot now very easily launch an unprovoked attack on Iraq; if he does, the political cost will be extremely high. But a retreat is equally out of the question. One obvious move is open to him, however, and of late it has been urged upon him from all sides. He can and should involve Congress in his own predicament. Constitutionally, as we have been repeatedly told, a declaration of war is up to Congress. Bush, therefore, should invite that body to declare war. Whether they said yes or no, Bush would be in a much easier position. The hot potato of warmongering (or weakness) would be in Congress's lap.

But this is what Bush *doesn't* want

Orthodox Catholics: DON'T DESPAIR!

Anne Roche Muggeridge, daughter-in-law of convert Malcolm Muggeridge, has said in her recent book, *The Desolate City: Revolution in the Catholic Church* (Harper & Row): "Because the integrity of its message has been betrayed, the Catholic Church is in ruins. Yet even now there are converts, of exceptionally high quality, and their number is increasing with the tenure of the present Pope. Catholics watched with a mixture of pity and amusement as the excellent Anglo-Catholic *New Oxford Review* argued and agonized itself into the [Roman] Catholic Church. I know a substantial number of recent converts like this and am much edified by their purity and ardour. Seven of them are my godchildren, and I must confess that some of us, to our shame, earnestly tried to delay them, on the grounds of the growing disorder in the Catholic Church. They forced their way past us anyway, thank God. They come because at the highest level of Catholic teaching, the doctrine of the faith, though much embattled, remains uncompromised and is as fearlessly proclaimed by John Paul II as by Peter, Paul, Ignatius, or Augustine. These new Catholics and the extraordinary Pope to whom they belong are a very present comfort when one is tempted to despair."

Over the last quarter century, the number of converts to Roman Catholicism slowed to a trickle. But now, a new wave of converts is entering the Church. What's more, contrary to the shibboleth that Catholicism is a superstitious religion for the ignorant, an unusually high proportion of the new Catholics consists of writers and intellectuals. Among them, it may be hoped, is another Chesterton, another Maritain, another Newman, another Ronald Knox, another Dorothy Day, another Gerard Manley Hopkins, another Edith Stein – converts all.

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to do. True, he met with congressional leaders. But when they reminded him of their prerogatives, Bush pulled a copy of the Constitution from his pocket and replied: "I know what the Constitution says, but it also says I am commander in chief."

It is curious that the President should be so reluctant to use the escape route that is readily available to him. A likely explanation, of course, is that he does not yet see the predicament that he is in. He is in the position of a chess player who has made two bad moves and doesn't know it yet, although the onlookers do.

It sounded more plausible to me after I spoke to a senior administration political appointee recently. Bush had been advised that breaking his no-new-taxes pledge had inflicted serious political damage, I was told, and he knew that the advisers who brought this bad news weren't lying to him. But he still didn't realize what it was that he had done wrong, the appointee told me. As the President saw it, he needed to make a deal with Congress to get a budget, and the deal had been duly struck. What was so bad about that?

Bush seems to think that politics entails negotiating with known quantities in a private room rather than reaching out to an unknown, wider audience. This is an anachronistic view, given the vast media apparatus that is uniquely at his disposal. He doesn't have any choice about using this apparatus, just as the head of a large corporation today doesn't have any choice about using computers and fax machines and the latest technology. He may have a personal affection for fountain pens and manual typewriters but his competitors will drive him out of business if he clings to them. Likewise, today a head of state must use the media to reach a wider audience. Others will if he doesn't. Saddam Hussein has, and Bush keeps replying with the inappropriate rejoinder that this is merely "cynical."

Bush seems to construe politics as an arena of fixed, well-defined power relations, not as something fluid and amenable to argument and persuasion. (As George Will has pointed out, Bush disparages argument as "bickering.") The tricky part, Bush seems to believe, is handling people more powerful than yourself. With really powerful people, like committee chairmen on Capitol Hill, you just have to reach the best deal you can. And of course with big powerful countries like China you have to be very careful (truckling emissaries no doubt will have to be dispatched).

But with the head of a small country like Iraq? No deals are needed. Just telephone your good friends in foreign countries, arrange for a Security Council vote at the U.N., and send the army abroad. Notice that Bush has this exactly the wrong way around. In domestic budget negotiations, an uncompromising presidential stance is not only appropriate but practically demanded by the institutional logic of the federal government as presently organized. (Stand by for the deficits next year.) A few speeches to the American people about how Congress was eager to raise taxes, and those committee chairmen would have begun to look far less powerful.

In preparing to go to war, however, agreement with Congress is highly desirable. If the country is not united about such a course of action, perhaps it never was a good idea in the first place. Better for a President to be pushed into a war by popular demand than for him to leap blithely over the top, only to find the electorate lagging reluctantly in the rear. That's the uncomfortable position that President Bush finds himself in today. Barring a tremendous stroke of luck, the next two years will be uncomfortable ones for him and for the GOP. □

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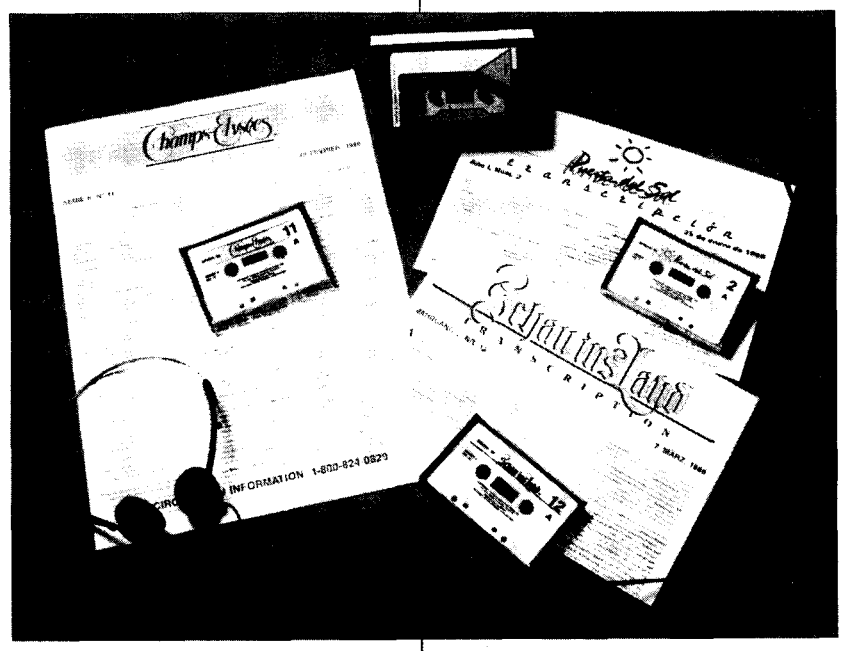

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Fred Barnes

BUSH'S GREAT ESCAPE

The elections of 1990 have weakened Republicans, but less than they had feared. Voters have given President Bush a four-issue agenda he would be wise to follow if he hopes to win them over in 1992.

George Bush had a pleasant election night. While his aides gathered (and sometimes bickered) at Vice President Dan Quayle's house, he stayed home and relished his victory in the expectations game. His party did better than anticipated, his Democratic enemies worse. Three potential Democratic presidential candidates—Governor Mario Cuomo of New York, Senator Bill Bradley of New Jersey, and House Majority Leader Richard Gephardt of Missouri—won unimpressively. Bradley and Gephardt weren't likely to challenge Bush in 1992 anyway. But now it's all but certain they won't run for the Democratic presidential nomination. With Cuomo, it's iffy. Senator Lloyd Bentsen of Texas and Governor Bill Clinton of Arkansas also suffered. Exit polls found that home state voters think they'd make lousy Presidents—by a 54-38 percent margin in Clinton's case, 49-41 percent in Bentsen's. Cuomo and Bradley got thumped in the exit polls, too. By 53-41 percent, New Yorkers said Cuomo wouldn't be a good President. By 50-40 percent, New Jersey voters are sour on Bradley in the White House.

Two days later, there was more good news for Bush. Patrick Buchanan, the most visible conservative in the country, signed a new three-year contract with CNN. This doesn't preclude Buchanan from taking a leave to run against Bush from the right in the GOP presidential primaries in 1992. But I'm betting against it. Contrary to the belief of Bush's advisers, Buchanan could cause the President real trouble by accentuating the differences between Bush and conservatives. In presidential politics, trouble in the spring can lead to defeat in the fall. Ask Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter, if you don't believe me. Buchanan, by the way, took no chances at CNN. He signed his contract hours before Ted Turner announced his engagement to Jane Fonda. Now it's too late for Buchanan to be undermined at CNN by pillow talk.

Despite all this, Bush would be nuts to rest on his laurels. While his leading foes are momentarily neutralized, Bush is not firmly fixed on the track to re-election—far from it. His party is badly divided. His political base, to the limited extent Bush has one at all, is fragile. And he is poorly positioned on issues. More than any politician in America, Bush needs to understand the lessons of the 1990 election. If he does, Bush will position himself on four issues from the 1990 campaign in a way that unites Republicans and gives him a broad, unassailable base in the party. If he doesn't, he may crash in 1992 and become, as Kevin Phillips puts it, "the last President of the Republican White House cycle that began 22 years ago with Richard Nixon." Here are the issues:

Taxes. The lesson here is so unequivocal that even Democratic Governor Jim Florio of New Jersey, author of the biggest tax increase in the history of any state, understood. Voters went considerably out of their way to say they don't want their taxes raised, sharply or marginally, especially when the purpose is income redistribution, and even when the new tax burden supposedly falls on the rich. In New Jersey, the soak-the-rich populism that Phillips says is the wave of the 1990s took a horrible beating. Voters figured out, as they usually do, that tax increases never concentrate on the rich. That's not where the money is. To raise real revenue, you've got to hit the middle class. Florio did. Higher taxes were imposed on those making as little as $35,000 a year. Since Florio wasn't on the ballot this fall, voters had only one recourse—vote against Bradley, who refused to express any opposition to the Florio levy. When Bradley nearly lost, Florio blinked, promising to revise his tax boost. Phillips argued lamely, on National Public Radio, that Bradley was also hurt because he authored the "bubble" in federal income tax rates that makes upper middle-class people pay a 33 percent marginal rate. That's nonsense. Bradley's mistake was not portraying himself on TV (he had $12 million to spend) as father of the 1986 tax reform act, which dropped personal income rates dramatically. Instead, he was seen as, at best, neutral on high taxes. His Republican opponent wasn't.

In state after state, governors who'd raised taxes either didn't run for reelection or ran and lost. Republican Bob Martinez of Florida managed to repeal the tax increase that had gotten him into hot water, but he lost anyway. His opponent, Lawton Chiles, talked up smaller government and said spending should be cut before taxes are raised. Phillips makes much, in *Newsweek*, of Democrat Paul Wellstone's ouster of Republican Senator Rudy Boschwitz in Minnesota. Wellstone "campaigned for taxing the wealthy," Phillips notes. That's true, but Boschwitz had just voted for a huge tax increase in the budget agreement and then campaigned on the slogan, "It's Time to Govern." Voters, who aren't stupid, translated this correctly as "It's Time to Raise Taxes." In choosing between taxers, voters in a Democratic state will invariably pick the Democratic taxer. It's also true that all but one state referendum rolling back taxes lost. The rollbacks were simply too draconian. Voters are more worried about warding off new taxes than uprooting old ones. Still, my guess is that a less sweeping rollback would have won in Massachusetts. Too bad it wasn't on the ballot.

Fred Barnes is a senior editor of the New Republic.

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Bush imbibed the tax lesson instantly. Two days after the election, he renewed his no-new-taxes pledge. But his credibility, after he reneged on his earlier pledge, is shot on this issue. Bush has to do something tangible to show that he means it this time. He might apologize for having accepted a budget agreement loaded with tax hikes, but I guess it's too late for that. Besides, Budget Director Richard Darman would pout. The smartest tack for Bush is to lean on Congress to pass an anti-recession agenda of tax cuts, including cuts in capital gains and the Social Security payroll tax, and increases in the personal exemption. These would offset the tax increases in the budget pact. Advocacy of tax cuts, if Bush sticks to it, will unite the Republican party and begin to create a solid base of conservative Bush supporters. Had Bush gotten a cap-gains cut in the budget deal in the first place, he'd never have driven away House Republican Whip Newt Gingrich and other conservatives.

Abortion. The pro-abortion movement defeated abortion restrictions, even parental consent, in Oregon and elected a few more of their crowd to Congress. But 1990 was hardly a big pro-choice year. The lesson is that pro-life Republicans and Democrats, if they don't flinch or flip-flop, are not hindered at all. In Pennsylvania, Governor Bob Casey, a pro-life Democrat, won re-election with 68 percent of the vote against a pro-choice Republican. This was the most lopsided victory in a Pennsylvania governor's race in fifty years. In Kansas, Joan Finney, a pro-life Democrat who attracted the wrath of the National Organization for Women, handily defeated pro-choice Republican Governor Mike Hayden, despite being outspent $2 million to $300,000.

In Michigan, Republican John Engler not only stuck to his pro-life guns, but chose an anti-abortion running mate as well. That was supposed to end his chances of whipping Democratic Governor Jim Blanchard, who'd vetoed bills restricting abortions. Engler won. In Ohio, pro-life Republican George Voinovich easily weathered pro-choice attacks by Democrat Anthony Celebrezze, who'd recently reversed himself and joined the pro-abortion side. In Iowa, pro-life Republican Governor Terry Branstad was challenged by a Democrat, Don Avenson, who'd made abortion rights his paramount issue. That got him the Democratic nomination over Attorney General Tom Miller, who's pro-life. But he lost 61-39 percent to Branstad, a crushing defeat for the pro-choice movement but one the press as usual ignored.

Though Bush may be queasy about his pro-life stand, these results show there's no reason to be. Pro-choicers can't defeat him or hurt him. Trouble will come only if he wavers. That will reinforce his image as an empty suit, an ideological eunuch. Bush is free to call the GOP a "big tent" under which pro-lifers and pro-choicers can gather. But he'd better adhere to his own personal position on abortion. In fact, he'd be wise to curb White House aides eager to spread the word that members of Bush's family—Barbara, for instance—are pro-choice. He won't win any pro-choice votes that way, but he's sure to irritate his pro-life supporters. And they're an important part of the political base he needs to build.

In choosing between taxers, voters in a Democratic state will invariably pick the Democratic taxer.

Environment. With the defeat of every major environmental initiative in every state, Bush is no longer required to pander to the environmental lobby. Extremism in defense of trees, owls, and organic cauliflower is out—that's plainly a lesson of the 1990 election. It's fine for Bush to call himself the Environmental President. That's silly but harmless. Now it's time to tend to another important segment of any Republican presidential candidate's base, the business community. Bush alienated a lot of the business crowd by foisting billions in costs upon them. He did this with the Clean Air Act and the Americans With Disabilities Act. He needs to repair the damage, particularly by restraining his Environmental Protection Agency from enforcing Clean Air provisions with anti-business fury.

The rejection of Big Green and Forests Forever in California shouldn't be treated lightly just because it occurred so far from Washington and hasn't excited the national press. For almost two decades, political trends—tax revolt, Reaganism, term limits—have run west to east in the United States. I think this one will too. Politicians may be slow to realize it, but it's now acceptable to question the claims of environmentalists. Big Green leaned heavily on two false propositions, that pesticides cause cancer in people and that global warming is happening. The initiative lost by 63-37 percent. One clever tactic used against Big Green was to link it to an unpopular person—in this case, State Assemblyman Tom Hayden, Jane Fonda's ex-husband. The anti-Big Green cry was "No on Hayden." If Bush had any sense, he'd find an environmental extremist of his own to play off.

Quotas. Stern opposition to hiring quotas for minorities and women not only helped GOP Senator Jesse Helms win re-election in North Carolina, it aided Republican Pete Wilson's victory in the California governor's race. This is an issue for the 1990s; it won't go away. For Bush, the issue is significant because it appeals to the wing of the conservative coalition in presidential races with which he has little affinity, Reagan Democrats. They're a pivotal group in 1992. If Bush doesn't attract them, he's in hot water.

Bush shouldn't try to duplicate Helms's crude exploitation of the issue. That would be unpresidential. On the other hand, he shouldn't ignore the magnitude of Helms's achievement. Helms pulled off the toughest feat in electoral politics, driving up the turnout. He Brought out lower middle-class white voters in droves, the sort of voters who normally are indifferent about going to the polls in mid-term elections. Turnout jumped from 34 percent of eligible voters in 1986 to 40 percent in 1990. For Democrat Harvey Gantt to win, he needed black voters (nearly all of them Democrats) to comprise 25 percent of the electorate. Under normal circumstances, this would have happened. But Helms made sure the situation wasn't normal. As it turned out, whites voted in such large numbers that blacks made up only 19 percent.

The issue of quotas is explosive and emotional. Bush needs to treat it with sensitivity. If he appeals to racism, the issue will blow up in his face. Quotas are a moral issue. So Bush should base his opposition on moral values, namely fairness and unfettered opportunity. Of course, he'll have to abandon any hope of hearing kind words from civil rights leaders in 1992. In building a solid political base, he's bound to make some people mad. That's the price of victory in 1992. □

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Thomas Mallon

RHODE SHOW

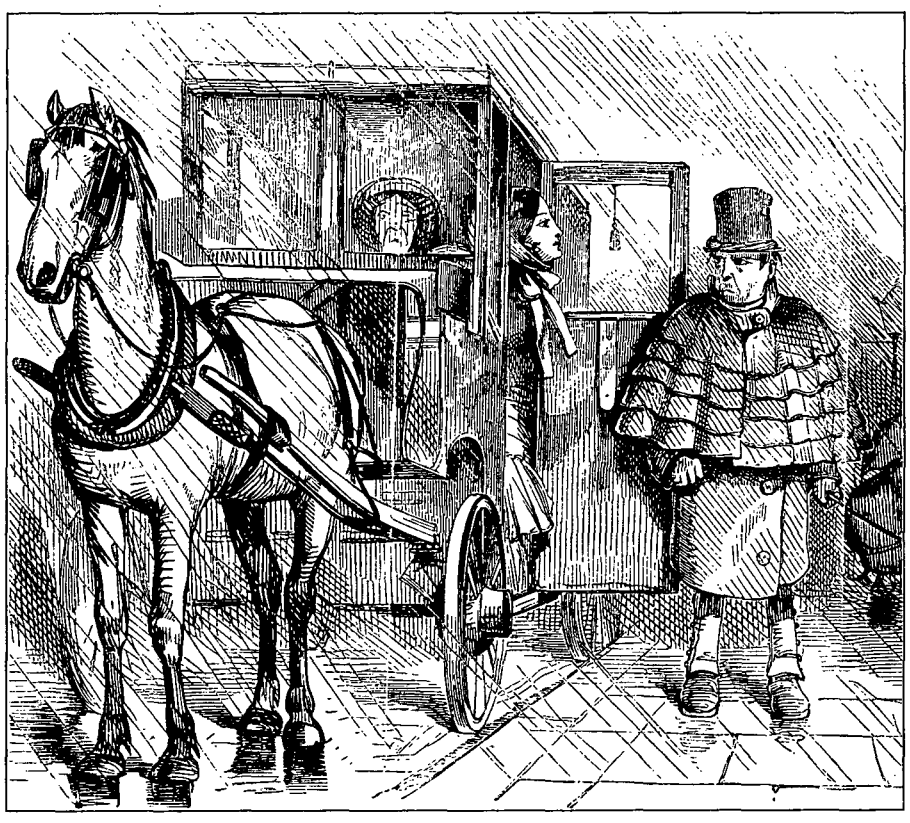
Rhode Island's senatorial race pitted doddering Claiborne Pell against perky Claudine Schneider. It offered the voter New Age rhetoric in old age homes, lots of ethnic food, and a gaggle of wayward Kennedys—and confirmed that, in an era of vapid politics, age still comes before beauty.

"This is by no means a done deal," says Rick Gureghian. "I think these polls can move." He means downward, but five days before the election, the campaign staff of Senator Claiborne Pell hardly seem worried. Their headquarters, here in Providence, Rhode Island, on the fourth floor of the converted Davol rubber-goods factory, are busy, but hardly frantic. Gureghian, the press man, is merely making the don't-tempt-the-gods remarks required of frontrunners. Such Grecian caution is perhaps in order, since Gureghian, like Pell's campaign manager, Mary Beth Cahill, used to work for Michael Dukakis—"in the good days," he tells me.

Claiborne Pell is almost 72 years old, and has served Rhode Island in the Senate since 1961. Except for his 1972 race against John Chafee, another of the state's disappearing Brahmins, his campaigns have been walk-throughs. This one was supposed to be different. The Republicans have nominated Claudine Schneider, a popular five-term congresswoman from the western part of the state. Still only 43, she is pro-choice, conspicuously pro-environment, and except for a bit of Republican parsimony, dependably liberal. (In 1987 she voted against President Reagan more frequently than any other Republican member of the House.) The state, while overwhelmingly Democratic, can be generous with ticket splitting (Chafee made it to the other Senate seat in 1976), so early this year Schneider was regarded as the kind of Republican with a good shot at moving up.

But it is proving to be tricky. Pell, who speaks in a soft, aristocratic slur, a millionaire who wears worn-out suits, is an institution, someone seen as simultaneously befuddled and effective. He fathered the Basic Educational Opportunity Grants in 1972, "the cornerstone of federal aid to students," as Congressional Quarterly's *Politics in America* puts it. They were officially rechristened Pell Grants in 1980, and since then have been a continuing advertisement of his name. About 160,000 Rhode Islanders have had them to date.

If Schneider could find a way to do what Mondale couldn't in 1984—gently suggest that the nice old man is past it—it was thought she might pull off the trick. During a debate on August 1, she asked Pell to name the last thing he'd done for Rhode Island, and he answered: "I couldn't give you a specific answer. My memory's not as good as it should be." (He later said he thought she was talking about legislation targeted toward individuals, such as a bill to help resolve someone's immigration status.) This could have been her breakthrough, but Iraq invaded Kuwait the next day and Pell, as chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, had the heaven-sent photo opportunity to lead a congressional delegation to the Middle East. To no one's surprise, he has since found little time to debate Schneider, and she has slipped way behind in the polls. She's hired David Garth, and he's got Bob Squier, but what was supposed to be a hard-fought, if unideological, contest has turned out to be like many of his past races. Frustrated, Schneider has let slip a crack about the senator's being "out of it," but that hasn't played well. "First they were nice, then they were subtly negative, then they were negative, and now they're nice again," says Gureghian, a heavyset smoker who cast his first vote for McGovern and who, for all his ability to talk to you in press releases (Pell has been "a leader on women's and family issues in the Senate"), would probably relish a bare-knuckles fight with this sparkly woman who looks different in each picture; who was born in the steel town of Clairton, Pennsylvania, but whose conversation has a hint of New Age crystal; and who has gone so far as to endorse those tapes pushed on late-night TV by Tony Robbins, the coiffed Cro-Magnon of mail-order motivation.



As far ahead as Pell seems to be on November 1, it probably *isn't* quite a done deal. No one knows for sure just how disgusted the budget fiasco has left people feeling, or whom they'll take it out on. The country could be at war by Tuesday, and Claudine Schneider has energy to burn. So the Pell strategy is, rather like the man, slow and steady. Today they've had him shaking hands at a UPS shift change and going to Blue Cross-Blue Shield at lunchtime. In a little while, he'll be getting ready for two evening fundraisers (one a "high-dollar" affair, the other a "low-dollar" one, according to Gureghian) on the same floor of the Biltmore Hotel in Providence.

At 6:00 p.m., in a room around the corner from the Bacchante Room (which, if one judges by the size of the shrimp, must be the high-dollar affair), Pell is holding a quick press conference with Sen. George Mitchell, the majority leader, and some candidates lower down the state Democratic ticket. In his shy, seigneurial way, Pell makes sure that Kathleen Connell, the secretary of state, comes up to "bask in these wonderful TV cameras," before he introduces Mitchell as someone who would make a "wonderful President of the United States."

Mitchell proceeds to show, instantly, why he would be no such thing. He speaks in the soothing, excessively sane way of a bereavement counselor. He supposedly does harbor presidential ambitions, and it is not beyond possibility that he will become the final pod-candidate for the Democrats, the terminal case of the progressive anemia that has afflicted their presidential offerings since McGovern. He talks up the Pell Grants, and says that their creator "has conducted himself with

Thomas Mallon's new novel, Aurora 7, *will be published in January by Ticknor & Fields.*

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dignity and honor in a manner that has earned him the respect of every member of the Senate, Democrat and Republican." Pell, who looks like a geriatric boy, clenching and clasping his hands, says, "You make me feel very humble." He probably even means it. The secretary of state continues the tribute to his manners, noting the dignity with which he's conducted this race, even though it's been a tough one. The race, in fact, has not been tough, and the implication, that Schneider has been undignified, isn't true either, but the Democrats, who love *noblesse oblige* with a fervor beyond anything Republicans can summon, are reveling in the opportunity to gaze upon Pell as a gentle, stammering FDR.

Mitchell takes a question on the just-past budget crisis. "I'm glad it's over," he says to needlessly hearty laughter. He gets some applause when he says, "It's time the Republicans stopped soaking the middle class," and he follows that up with some sarcasm about the President's "passionate commitment" to the rich, but there is a kind of mad decorum to his thumping of these old party tubs, as if Julie Andrews were attempting to do Ethel Merman's old act.

When it's over, Pell shuffles out of the room behind Mitchell, saying—more patrician modesty—"I'll take one percent." Out in the hall, a kid in a suit, the head of Youth for Pell, says, "That was nice, huh?" to a TV reporter, before engaging some other guys, including Scott Wolf, the young not-much-of-a-chance candidate for Congress in the 1st district, in a little chatter about what a terrific guy Pell is.

The kid is Patrick Kennedy, Teddy's son, almost the youngest of the second Kennedy wave, that *tsunami* of new and future office holders. Born in 1967, Patrick is already a state rep in the Rhode Island General Assembly, from a little district up by the state house itself. Rhode Island is the small neighboring estate that the Kennedys have leased for a family baby short-changed by political primogeniture, and it is probably safe to say that few state assembly campaigns have been conducted at a higher per capita cost than was his first one back in 1988.

He is actually a nice boy; perhaps the friars of Providence College, where he went to school, put an extra coat of manners on him. He has his mother's eyes instead of the cold ones of the Kennedy males. He displays a trace of his uncles' nervous nodding, but whether this is a matter of genetic encoding or a characteristic acquired from watching videos of the republic's longest family home movie, it's difficult to say.

He stands outside the Bacchante Room, where the high-dollar fund-raiser has begun, and talks up Senator Pell to me at a length beyond the call of duty, showing an awareness of the statistic Rhode Island politicians use to focus themselves the way an alcoholic uses the serenity prayer: the state is second in the nation in its percentage of senior citizens. "There's no one who's done more for the elderly than Pell," he asserts. "You know the COLAs? That's Senator Pell." But he'll be good for young people, too. When it comes to possible war in the Persian Gulf (where "a lot of kids from my college in the ROTC program" have gone to serve), Pell is a good bet because "he knows the mistakes from last time," like the Tonkin Gulf resolution.

If Schneider could find a way to do what Mondale couldn't in 1984—gently suggest that the nice old man is past it—it was thought she might pull it off.

As for the race against Schneider, Patrick offers some post-modern polspeak ("She failed to articulate her own campaign, her own message") and the standard tut-tutting about how she "went negative." The Democratic algebra for this particular contest is clear: multiplying a negative by a negative will yield a positive. Or, more simply, make people think she's acting like a bitch, and the aging gentleman will catch an armful of boomeranged ballots.

Rhode Island's chief airport, in Warwick, is named for Theodore Green, who stayed in the Senate to a much riper age than Pell has attained. It has a fancy Briefing Room with soundproof walls and rows of swivel chairs. But the impending Friday-morning arrival of Bob Dole, who'll be campaigning today for Schneider, isn't filling them. A few minutes before things are supposed to start I'm alone in the room with Jody McPhillips of the *Providence Journal.* She talks to me about Schneider's image, and about how impressed her editor was by all the bouncing energy Claudine displayed when she announced her candidacy—on Valentine's Day. "She's 43 years old," McPhillips says she told him. "What the hell's she jumping up and down for?"

By the time Schneider and Dole arrive, the number of press has swelled to five or six. "Good morning! Afternoon! What is it?" chirps Claudine, who does at this first glance promise an exhausting perkiness. The suit she has on is blazing red, but it's cut along dress-for-success lines, a strategic change, according to McPhillips, from the kookier outfits toward which she's more naturally inclined. Schneider announces the day's schedule and then Dole takes over for a while, saying this is still a "winnable seat" in a "volatile state." He says he's happy to respond to any questions, "except about the Red Cross." This joking reference to his wife's new job makes one wonder if Schneider won't be replacing her as secretary of labor, a reward for going up against Pell.

Schneider stresses her independence and compliments the state's voters on theirs, noting that she ran ahead of Reagan here in '84. "I have had ten years of sticking to my guns," she says, and Dole promises it will be all right with him if, when she gets to the Senate, they don't always agree. The party needs diversity. He suspects, however, that as Republican leader he'll "be visiting with Claudine from time to time." What President Bush might call the Woman Thing plays well between Schneider and Dole, who brings up Nancy Kassebaum and notes: "I serve with two powerful women, one in the Senate and one at home." Schneider, down in polls of her own sex, contrives to make one comment "as a woman" and to answer a female reporter's question "woman to woman." A softball query to Dole, about how he would feel working with as many as five women in the Senate, a (slim) possibility after this election, is a plant: the questioner is really Schneider's field director.

Dole says he doesn't "run around attacking [his] colleagues in the Senate," and when he's asked what's wrong with Pell, the best he can come up with isn't much better than what Schneider has. You have to "look down the road ten, fifteen, twenty years."

It's been years since New York cab drivers had much to say to their passengers, but Rhode Island ones carry on the tradition of pontifical chatter. "I don't like negative campaigning," says Doug. "It turns me off." (A moment before, when I told him I wasn't sure of the address of the Cranston Senior Services center, at which I'm next supposed to find Schneider, this same sensitive soul said, "We'll find her. Just look for a tall, ugly broad.") Doug is not politically uninformed, and one gets the feeling that he now knows what, as far as this particular race goes, the Democrats want him to know—that he is supposed to dislike Schneider's negative campaigning.

So is he voting for Pell? Not necessarily, but he's leaning that way. He didn't like Bush's original tax proposal this season, and he inveighs against "millionaires" with gusto George Mitchell should study. But he can still make a pretty even-handed assessment of the candidates. Schneider, if no beauty, is "a nice person," and he thinks she's done "a lot of good work." He also buys into one of her arguments about Pell. He "could care less about the Foreign Relations Committee," and isn't sure Pell's "done much for the state of Rhode Island in the past six years," which is Schneider's point exactly: she'll try to get on the Commerce Committee to correct that. In New York, Alfonse D'Amato is happy to be called the "pothole senator" and leave the statesmanship to Moynihan. Schneider is in fact something of a conceptualist herself, but this committee-assignment argument is one of the few wedges she has available to drive between Pell and the voters, and over the next few days she'll push on it repeatedly.

But Pell fixes potholes, too. "I've never heard of him refusing to help someone," says Doug. "I think he's a decent man, an honest man." Schneider's chief hope when Doug goes to vote is his concern that Pell "may have outlived his usefulness."

He refers to Bruce Sundlun, the Democratic candidate for governor, as "Bruce," and tells me about campaign advice he's given him between Providence and the airport. Doug has had them all in his cab, and talking with him is a reminder of how funny federalism can be. Rhode Island Senate races are fought in a state that's more like a mid-sized city, where the candidates spend each campaign tripping over one another, and where the only way to take things is personally.

"There are no strangers here," says the sign inside the Cranston Senior Services center. "Only friends we haven't met yet." At 11:00 a.m. on Friday folks at the center are waiting to meet Claudine, who will try to meet every one of them. The magic-markered schedule of activities (Billiards, Oil Painting, Ceramics, Reminiscing with Christine, Exercise with Ida, Hi-Lo Jack) makes the seniors' days seem as fully empty as the round of factory gates, shopping centers, and fundraisers now filling Schneider's. She arrives with Dole and is greeted by "Ms. Senior Sweetheart of Cranston, R.I., 1991," who wears

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a purple dress, gray boots, and a tiara. The queen's proud consort tells me his wife was crowned in a regular pageant, in which her talent was singing, and that she has a year of scheduled appearances, just like Miss America.

"It's very close, so spread the word," says Claudine to a woman whose hand she shakes before bopping into a big room and joining a line of tap dancers. She gets a lot of applause, and I'm reminded of the little heel-bouncing imitation of her that Patrick Kennedy did for me last night outside the Bacchante Room. "I want you to meet Senator Dole, who's come to help campaign for me," she says in the over-explanatory way one uses with the very young. But if this place, its Halloween decorations still up, seems to infantilize the seniors, it also seems to humanize the politicians. Dole is posing with the old girls, squeezing and teasing them into photos. He seems to experience the whole thing less as the practice of politics than as a refuge from it. You wonder how he could have failed in New Hampshire.

To the tune of "Music, Music, Music" Claudine, who is in fact rather attractive, sits and chats and bops up again, clasping both hands of the ladies a head or two shorter than she is. She and Dole proceed to the Adult Day Care section and eventually upstairs, where the minority leader tells some exercisers that he uses his treadmill twenty-five minutes each day; Claudine, whose expression is never under 100 watts, determinedly connecting with everybody every second, says she's willing to join him on the treadmill of the Senate. I'm having trouble hearing in here, with the windows open and the traffic passing, and I wonder how people with three or four decades on me are managing. But Dole and Schneider are clearly making contact. "I recognize good people and good candidates when I see them," he says, proceeding to turn the Age Thing, for a moment, to Claudine's advantage: she's young and aggressive and will take care of their children and grandchildren, he insists. You wonder why she doesn't take a risk with the issue herself. The *Kansas City Star* reporter who's here following Dole tells me he's seen Pell dozing off in committee meetings. Why not bring that up with these old folks, whose perceptions of aging are likely to be a good deal less sentimental than those of Youth for Pell? Besides, what's she got to lose?

After a stop in the painting and ceramics room, Schneider says she's ready to get the show on the road. Before she can get out she greets a reporter ("I was so thrilled to get the *Warwick Beacon* endorsement") and responds to my question about one of the very few graspable differences between herself and the incumbent: she voted against Moynihan's Social Security proposal and Pell voted for it, "without doing his homework," she says, because it was "politically expedient." But she doesn't expect it to come up again in the next Congress, so as gunpowder available for blasting open this race, it's pretty wet by now.

And she's off. The Senior Sweetheart's husband tells me he thinks Claudine "deserves a chance." She's "a worker." But he knows a lot of people will vote for Pell, because, like them, the Senator's been around a long time.

Rhode Island is the small neighboring estate that the Kennedys have leased for a family baby shortchanged by political primogeniture.

Pell is coming to Cranston, too, for lunch at the Boston Submarine Sandwich Shop, whose Back Room the owner, Joe Pashalian, has made into a kind of noontime forum in which local politicians and commentators give speeches and take questions. It's a TV-writer's dream of a blue-collar setting, although the group around the table probably includes some small businessmen and a professional or two. Pell arrives with his daughter, who tells me that she's all for his running again: "He's got the stamina of a 40-year-old combined with the wisdom of being his age." One admires her loyalty, but the truth is he looks terribly fragile.

He sits down at the long table near the six-decker ovens and the great spread of Armenian cracker bread. One feels there ought to be musical accompaniment—perhaps "What Do the Simple Folk Do?" "Senator, what will you have?" He takes a plate of tuna salad, just tomatoes, no lettuce, and a glass of water—considerably less hearty fare than people usually come here for.

Someone calls the diners to order by pounding a mallet on the podium. Pell gives a short speech after a standing ovation. He talks about a meeting a couple of days ago with President Bush, and how he helped convey the message to "go slow, go easy" in the Persian Gulf. Risking a reminder of his own advancing years, he concludes his remarks by recalling the story of a senator who dreamt he was making a speech on the Senate floor and then awoke to find that he was.

Anna Minicucci, who introduced herself to me as Joe Pashalian's "unpaid publicist" and who is more than a little reminiscent of Rhea Perlman, asks him a question about "human potential." Pell is interested in ESP and extraterrestrials, and is lucky that Schneider likes astrology, or else there might be a real Flake Factor to overcome. He responds with talk about the exceptional physical and mental feats people can sometimes perform, like reading and retaining a whole page of print in a flash. "I remember John Kennedy had that skill," he says by way of shrewdly chosen example. "I think these areas should be explored."

He gets a laugh by calling the White House chief of staff Mr. Say-No-No, and thoughtful attention when he calls for a longer school year. "Some of you may have heard of the Pell Grants," he says, a little like LBJ going into a nursing home and saying, "Perhaps you've heard of Medicare." But he is not all ADA-sponsored boilerplate. There's a kind of intellectual *droit de seigneur* about him, a measure of independence that is also, one supposes, a privilege of age. "I'm sort of sympathetic to it," is his surprising answer about a proposal to make English the official language, though he's glad he's not had to make a decision on it. He's supported bilingual education in the past, but fears that if a child has it for too many years it becomes a crutch. And he was against forgiving Egypt its foreign-aid debt as a reward for its support in the Gulf crisis: there are many recipient countries supportive of the U.S., so how do you choose one and not another? On the Foreign Relations Committee he'd prefer working once more with the "reasonable" Senator Lugar as ranking minority member. Jesse Helms "is just"—he pauses, closes his eyes, shakes his hand near his head while searching for words—"very difficult to deal with." That's the highest pitch of nastiness he'll reach in the campaign.

Arlene Violet, a former Sister of Mercy, served as Rhode Island's attorney general in the mid-1980s. As a lawyer she'd gotten the nickname "Attila the Nun," but a perception of incompetence queered her re-election. Now back in private practice, she is currently filling in for Vincent "Buddy" Cianci, who has put aside his radio talk-show on 920 AM, WHJJ, to run as an independent for mayor of Providence. (Cianci was mayor from 1975 until 1984, when he pleaded no contest to a felony charge of assaulting the man he thought was his wife's lover with a fireplace log. Seventeen individuals associated with his administration went to jail for corruption. But the billboards in town tell you "He never stopped caring about Providence," and Buddy is now given an almost even shot at regaining his old job.)

Schneider does Violet's radio show from 4:00-5:00. Arlene is sympathetic to her, and uses her buzzsaw accent to fend off hostile callers: "*Aaaar* you *se*rious?" she demands of one guy.

The candidate does what pitching she can, along already familiar lines: the gently xenophobic (in a changed world, aging Rhode Islanders could use somebody on a "health-related" committee, not Foreign Relations); the feminist (her "good women's intuition" tells her it's close—and, by the way, asks Arlene, "How many women *aaar* there in the Senate?"); the independent (not every Republican "is cast in the image and likeness of the President"); and the anti-incumbent (she's for a 12-year limit on House terms, and wishes that her "altruistic [sic] belief" in the willingness of voters to get rid of the entrenched when need arises were more frequently borne out by elections).

One caller takes her to task for claiming on "Face the Nation" that she voted to override the President's veto of the civil-rights bill when, in fact, the House never voted at all. She just "misspoke," she explains; she was *prepared* to vote that way if the matter went beyond the Senate. Schneider does seem to have a tendency, beyond the ordinary one of politicians, to claim more credit than she's entitled to for certain initiatives. Clippings containing stories to that effect have even crept into her own campaign press-pak. But it's clear that a number of the hostile calls coming in are Pell-campaign plants: they're too sound-bitten to be otherwise. "Is this what we're to expect from Claudine Schneider in the Senate?" asks one of them, like the last line of an attack ad, in the course of a complaint about her supposedly "going negative." After a couple like these, Claudine and Arlene have a laugh about it. They even seem to recognize one of the voices. "It's fixed," says a sympathetic caller. "We know that," Schneider says gratefully. One wonders if it isn't a bit of karmic comeuppance for her field director's having pretended to be a reporter at the press conference with Dole.

Friday night brings a couple of hundred Democratic faithful, who have ridden behind the party mule from Deal to Frontier to Great Society and through the mostly desert country of the past twenty years, to a big hall in Pawtucket. This is a tired town, with an unusual number of funeral homes, hoping for some new life in the form of an Off-Track Betting parlor, if the

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voters approve the relevant referendum on Tuesday.

In front of the state flag, which, when draped against its pole, looks like the Vatican's, Mayor Brian J. Sarault introduces Pell, who thanks him by telling the truth: "You make a much better speech than I do." Unimpressed by any need to show dynamism, Pell rambles on about the nature of compliments: "I often thought it would be fun to announce your own death, sit in the back of the church and see who comes . . . " He refers to the Republicans as "our ad*ver*saries," and advises the crowd against complacency with the example of "poor Mr. Bellotti" who lost the primary in Massachusetts to John Silber despite all the polls that said he wouldn't.

The lieutenant governor who follows Pell, Roger Begin, receives loud applause when he takes note of how the Senator never refers to his opponent by name: "that's part of the gentleman of Senator Pell." As the election nears, his *noblesse oblige* is becoming more a holy legend than a mere selling point. The way tonight's speakers go on about the Pell Grants, one would almost think they were golden guineas extracted from the velvet bag of the Senator's personal fortune. It's clear by now that the Democrats think it's ill-willed of Schneider to be campaigning at all.

On Saturday afternoon I decide to catch Schneider at a scheduled campaign stop at the Ann & Hope discount department store in Cumberland, in the northeast corner of the state. The chain, particularly its Warwick branch, is a sort of lucky spot for her, and she's supposed to arrive at three—after appearing at the Almacs supermarket in Bristol; the First Congregational Church bazaar/lunch, also in Bristol; an Episcopal church in Woonsocket; and a high-school football game in North Smithfield.

The Cumberland Ann & Hope is less a discount store than a sort of literal factory outlet: the chain uses the name of the old textile mill in which the Cumberland branch is located. But unlike Pell's headquarters in the old Davol plant, this is no piece of boutique architectural restoration. The store was simply thrown into the vast old structure, with pipes and ducts and electrical tape above your head wherever you walk. A little conveyor belt, adding to the industrial effect, takes your shopping cart from the first floor to the basement while you use a flight of stairs. The current decorations—huge red-white-and-blue signs shaped like candidates' rosettes, proclaiming "Unbeatable Values"—seem just the right backdrop for the challenger's appearance.

But by 3:30 there's no sign of her, so I call the headquarters in Warwick. She's been delayed in East Providence, I'm told. But I thought she was coming from North Smithfield. The aide on the other end of the phone doesn't know about that. She says the schedule has been shaky because it had to be drawn up in such a rush: they didn't know when Claudine would be allowed to escape Washington and the budget crisis. She says, twice, that the schedule "travels with" the candidate in her car; the phrase sounds like a metaphysical feat, effect backflipping over cause. But if I'd like I can probably catch her at the St. Joseph Veterans Association supper, up in Woonsocket, sometime between 6:30 and 7:00.

A softball query to Dole, about how he would feel working with as many as five women in the Senate, is a plant: the questioner is really Schneider's field director.

Woonsocket has a heavy French-Canadian population; today's local paper carries an ad for the state-legislative campaign of Rene Menard, chaired by Roger Valois. Now, a little before 6:00 on a Saturday evening, a few Saint Joseph veterans are outside their cinderblock hall, drinking beer and frying the steaks for tonight's supper. They tell me they don't know anything about Claudine Schneider showing up tonight, though she was here twice in the past week or so, for two different benefits. They let me hang around as dinner gets prepared and then underway, and I assume the schedule has once more traveled with the candidate, into another dimension.

But eventually a car pulls up carrying Mrs. Nenette Cmarada, "Claudine's Mom," as her nametag says, along with Andrew Oser, a friend from Washington who's helping in the campaign. Mom has already been in Warwick and Lincoln and East Providence today, though here in Woonsocket she's in her most effective venue: a Belgian native, she's made lots of phone calls in French to the locals. A lively woman who's a great deal more youthful than Claiborne Pell, she tells me that this stuff about negative campaigning is nonsense. Claudine is "clean-living . . . a clean person." She wouldn't do that, and besides, "she and Mr. Pell were friends all the past ten years she's been in Washington." Washington has been her daughter's big problem. Being stuck there has put her under "a lot of pressure and stress. It's been a very difficult time for her, very frustrating."

Daughter arrives, in a dark dress and a long string of pearls, and plunges into the roomful of tables, greeting the diners with her usual pitch. "It's a very close race," she says, putting her hands on the backs of their chairs. "Don't cut my Social Security," one of them tells her to the whole table's laughter. "If you cut my Security, forget it."

"Not me!" says Claudine.

She's schmoozing as fast as she can. She was supposed to have left here before she even arrived. It's 7:20 now and she goes from table to table under the blue, green, and pink ceiling lights as the tape plays "Sixteen Candles." One guy tells her he's a "Democrat, straight through."

"I thought those days were behind us," says Schneider, who here in Rhode Island likes to stress the supposedly declining significance of parties.

"I'm a hard man to kill," he responds.

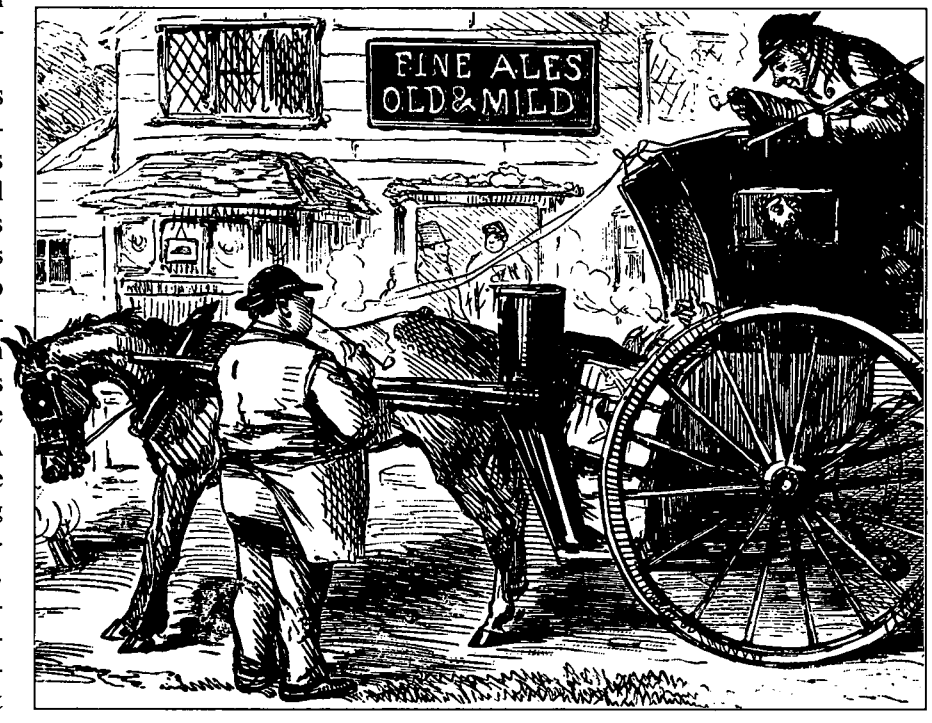
She gets serious. "I'm sorry he wants to vote for the party . . ."

"I'm only pullin' your leg."

It's time to see massive turnovers in the Congress, she says. We all need shaking up. "We're going to be competing with *eastern* Europe soon," says this daughter of a Czech tailor.

I ask her about something she said to Arlene Violet yesterday, about not wanting to be in politics forever. I tell her I believe she means it, that it's more than just a convenient thing to say when trying to retire a long-time senator. And if that's the case, where does she see herself fifteen years from now, whatever happens Tuesday? "I really don't have a clue," she says, before telling me about the crisis of her adult life: a diagnosis of Hodgkin's disease when she was twenty-five. "That made me stop, look, listen, and think"—and wonder, she says in her New Agey way, about how she might leave the "planet" a better place. Recalling that time, she says: "I had prayed that I would live." She beat the disease, thereby sustaining the relevance of her old feeling that she would have several careers, "maybe four or five" during her lifetime. What they are she doesn't know, but after politics she'll have "earned an easier lifestyle." Meanwhile, "Mr. Pell should feel the same way. He's given thirty good years, and I would think he would welcome some retirement."

She'd probably welcome some sleep. But before the night is over there's still a fundraiser in Slatersville, and then a Portuguese event in Pawtucket and then another in Bristol.



The next morning Claudine Schneider is in her royal-blue Sunday best—a full-skirted dress and a wide-brimmed hat—racing into the Pond Street Memorial Baptist Church on Providence's black south side. It's 11:20 as she arrives for a service she thought started at 11:15, but worse luck—Pastor Virgil Wood actually gets underway at 11:00, and as she stands in the foyer listening to the p.a., she hears him making announcements from the altar. Senator Pell, he tells the congregation, was at a rally in the church parking lot yesterday, and he called the reverend at home last night to thank him for the use of the church's property. Pastor Wood asks the faithful to remember the Pell Grants and "to show the brother

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we appreciate what he did." Before marching in, Schneider tosses me a look that combines mock-horror and *oy veh.* But she gamely enters and sits down just a few pews from the front. When Pastor Wood asks visitors to stand up and identify themselves, she goes right ahead, adding in a friendly way that she wishes he hadn't taken sides. Both the congregation and the minister, who must have given up on her coming, seem genuinely tickled, and he responds with light-hearted graciousness: "I can only tell you that some people listen to the pastor, and some people don't." The maroon-robed choir launches into "So Glad You're Here," and she claps along. It's agreed that she'll speak to the congregation at the fellowship after the service, downstairs.

That's a long time to wait to make one more speech, but she seems to enjoy the service, tapping her blue pumps to songs like "Take Me Higher" and "Pass Me Not." Pastor Wood's sermon doesn't just raise the roof; it threatens to pulverize the cinderblock walls. Schneider, who ordinarily makes up in pep whatever she lacks in eloquence, must be feeling like George Mitchell.

But downstairs at fellowship, after a very polite audience gathers in front of the coffee urn and punch bowl, she has the best fifteen minutes I see her display all week. She says that people in this congregation know what it is to be stereotyped, and she hates being stereotyped as a "cold-hearted Republican," not when her party has brought forth such heroes as Abraham Lincoln and . . . She struggles for a second name and is saved by the thought of that progressive environmentalist, Theodore Roosevelt. She talks about her fight against cancer and her "mission on this earth," proclaiming that she knows her "purpose," and praising the "unified power" people can have. She connects solidly with the most attentive audience I will hear her address. Still, I suspect that on Tuesday they will have no trouble voting against this woman they seem to like so much.

The *Providence Sunday Journal* carries an endorsement of Schneider ("Claiborne Pell's significant accomplishments are now largely behind him") and a big curious ad announcing that she has also been endorsed "By Members of Our Nation's Most Distinguished Bar Association—i.e., the cast of *Cheers.*" (It's because they "share her vision for the future.") The only real campaign news of the day comes in the form of an afternoon debate among the three candidates for mayor of Providence, during which Buddy Cianci displays his brutal charm against Fred Lippitt, the septuagenarian East Side WASP reformer, and Andrew Annaldo, the sleepy endomorph unaccountably nominated by the Democrats.

Annaldo is actually one of the stars of an evening rally put on by a Democratic ladies' auxiliary at Lombardi's restaurant, a big place way out on Charles Street in North Providence, past a thinly beaded string of neighborhood bars. Lombardi's actually turns out to be loud, happy, and packed ("I hope you're not taking the count for the fire department," one guy delightedly says to me when he spots my pad), and the crowd seems to be younger than the one that gathered Friday night in Pawtucket. But those are the ones standing. Sitting down at the wedding-banquet tables are the old people, sipping red wine, prepared to vote, and probably dreaming of Boca Raton. For all the noise in this room, one has to wonder why anybody would go into politics up here in Rhode Island: it seems an obsolescent industry, its market dying off as inexorably as newspaper readership.

Annaldo arrives, to the sounds of "Mack the Knife" and an absolutely mystifying show of enthusiasm: "An-*drew!* An-*drew!*" There's enough of a crush to make you worry that Senator Pell will be squeezed and broken when he tries to move from the entrance to the microphone. As he makes his way in I ask Mrs. Pell if, after thirty years, she ever gets tired of this stuff. "It's always different," she assures me. I ask her what's different this time. "Possible defeat," she says in a surprisingly spontaneous way.

Her husband makes his speech, drawing attention to the "absolutely nip-and-tuck" mayoral race, another usage whose quaintness the crowd no doubt likes. It seems so him, just as the other day he declared not that the U.S. couldn't be the world's policeman, but rather that it couldn't be its *gendarme.*

Pell concludes his remarks by recalling the story of a senator who dreamt he was making a speech on the Senate floor and then awoke to find that he was.

Monday, November 5, 1990: Thirty years ago today John F. Kennedy, on his way home to Hyannis to vote, addressed an election-eve rally in what was then called Exchange Place, in front of the Providence City Hall. The rally was large and memorable enough to make Exchange Place seem, several years later, the right spot to be renamed Kennedy Plaza. Now, at a tiny noontime rally for the Democratic ticket, the speakers keep invoking what happened "thirty years ago today" as a motivation for victory "in thirty hours," as Scott Wolf, the not-much-of-a-chance congressional candidate, puts it.

The Democrats will no doubt have a good day tomorrow, but this attempt at a street rally is an almost morbid exercise in nostalgia. The big blue Teamsters truck parked on the south side of the plaza might contain a gross of respirators. At least, after days of balmy weather, it finally feels like fall, nippy even; Mrs. Pell stands near the platform in a long woollen coat. The outgoing mayor of Providence introduces Jack Reed, another congressional candidate, as honest and "smot," and Reed tells the voters to make it simple for themselves: "Democrat, Democrat, Democrat."

Teddy Kennedy, the main attraction, his complexion alarmingly red, arrives on the platform to cheers, bringing Pell up with him and upstaging the candidate for governor, who's just begun to speak but gives up the notion, saying he "can't think of a greater privilege" than to start talking when the two senators are arriving. He quickly gets off and lets young Patrick Kennedy get on with the introduction of Pell, whose best line is a promise "not to be here thirty years from now."

The elder Kennedy comes on after an introduction by his son and proceeds to mispronounce the name of the gubernatorial candidate who was so privileged to be interrupted by his arrival. But he goes on to give such a hammy, forceful presentation—a lunch-bucket speech at the top of his lungs, almost as body-slamming a performance as Pastor Wood's this time yesterday—that he almost makes you think this is a real event, almost makes you forget that his outdoor audience isn't any larger than what Pastor Wood had inside the snug Pond Street Baptist Church. Before going full-tilt he brings up his mother, Rose, 100 years old up there on the Cape, claiming he chatted with her just this morning about Claiborne Pell. It's a charming bit of blarney that doesn't bear much looking into, perhaps no more than does this senator's reference to his commitment to "minimum standards of decency."

Beyond the massive urban reconstruction going on near the state capitol stands the University of Rhode Island's College of Continuing Education, an unpretentiously inspiring place full of what are called adult learners. Schneider was supposed to arrive at 6:00, at the student center, where people are cramming in a bit of homework and eating vending-machine sandwiches before going upstairs to a night class. "If she don't show up before seven, she ain't gonna meet anybody," says one woman to another out in the hall.

A minute later she's there, looking completely fresh in her red suit, which is draped with an oversized scarf (the telltale kooky touch). She goes from table to table ("It's very close"), handing out Xeroxes of her *Providence Journal* endorsement, striking up and artfully concluding one brief conversation after another. "Hiya, Miss Schneider," says one young woman, as if she's greeting the most popular teacher at the high school. Her mother is working the tables too ("Are you her mother? You're so short!"), until she seems too tired and goes off to the side. Her daughter seems not to be tired at all—is planning, in fact, to get up at five and go greet workers at the Electric Boat factory gate.

But in the early darkness of autumn a sadness comes over the scene, over this talented woman's miscalculated enterprise, which is heading down the drain. "If she could touch everyone in the state . . . ," one of her aides says to me, meaning shake every hand. In this duchy it's not so much a fantasy as a near-plausible might-have-been, if not for the budget mess. Only about three-quarters of the way through this stop does she learn that the rules do permit her to get up on the student center's stage and make a speech, and by then it seems too late. The aide doesn't think it's such a hot idea anyway, but I find myself wanting to tell her to go and do it: get up there and go positive and negative simultaneously, like a magnet. Tell them you're one of them, a kid from Clairton who's ambitious, and that there's nothing wrong with that, and if they're here on a Pell Grant, terrific, but they should remember that that money isn't his; it's their parents', and theirs, and it's been taxed out of them like anything else. Think of what Teddy Kennedy could do with this crowd, much less Pastor Wood.

But time is running out. I head back home in the dark, pretty sure she has no chance, that the conventional wisdom is this time wise. It's true that the mammoth construction I'm passing involves changing the course, literally, of two rivers that run through Providence. But while it would be a nice metaphor, I don't think it's going to apply. □

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Micah Morrison

THE SWORD AND THE SHIELD

Americans in Saudi Arabia are beginning to worry that the Saudis are using them as a kind of mercenary army. Underground *imams* are warning that the presence of Western forces could undermine Wahabi Islam. And the Saudi leadership is terrified that taking its expensive weaponry out of the warehouses could leave it on the wrong end of a popular revolt. A report from the Gulf.

Saudi Arabia

The flag of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a long sword on a field of green beneath the inscription: *There is no God but Allah and Muhammed is His prophet.* There is not yet an official emblem for Operation Desert Shield, the U.S.-led effort that has put over a quarter of a million soldiers and a vast array of high-tech weaponry into the kingdom, but there are plenty of unofficial ones. Industrious G.I.s immediately began producing T-shirts emblazoned with shields and eagles, F-15s and lightning bolts. One shirt on sale in an aircraft hangar features a scowling, pint-sized Saddam Hussein in a pirate hat, clutching smoking pistols and a "Nuke Israel" flag. It reads: "From the Same Asylum That Brought You Khaddafy Duck . . . Middle East Looney Tunes Presents: Yosemite Saddam!!!"

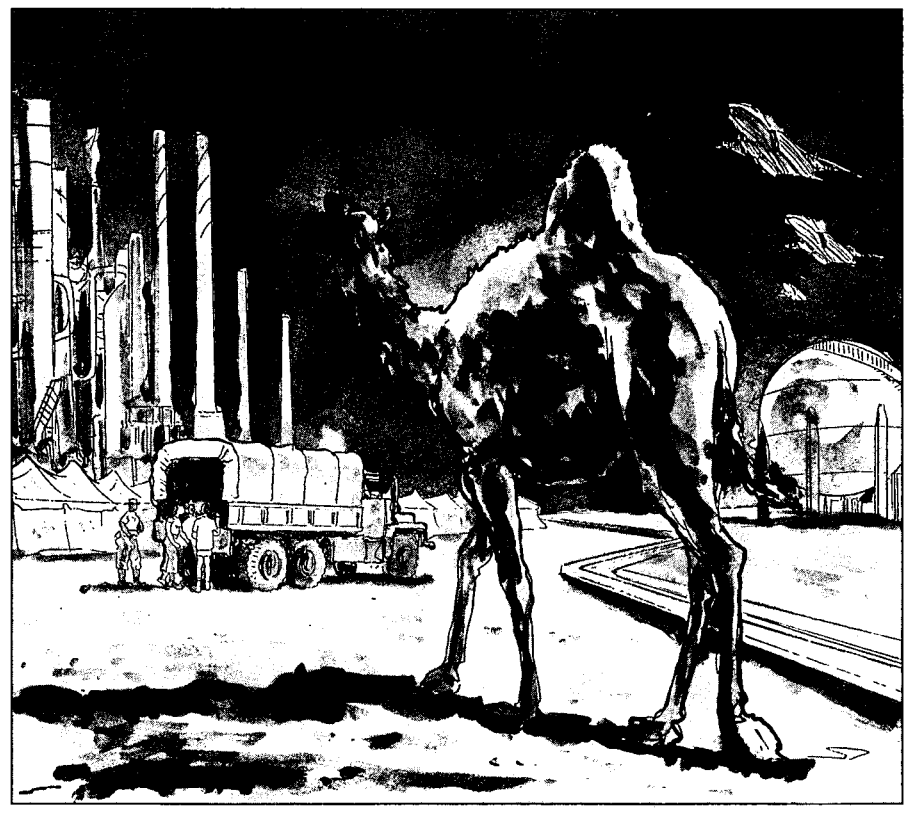
High spirits will give way to gallows humor if a shooting war starts, but as of this writing the war remains one of troop buildups and rhetorical bluster, a war of words and symbols. But there is a second war of sorts going on, with battle lines that are invisible, for it is a war fought across time, across history and cultures. The desert kingdom is nervous and restless, unhappy not only with the Western presence but with its own rulers. A country not used to domestic dissent is hearing it now, soft but distinct. A country made comfortable—some would say lazy—by oil wealth is now being called on by internal and external forces to display some backbone, some decisiveness.

It is not the Saudi way: the monarchy historically has preferred to place its money on all bets to forestall a heavy loss. And while the future is unclear, it is certain at least that Operation Desert Shield has brought a number of players out of the shadows of silence at home and out of formerly low-key international alliances, players who are slowly bending, if not changing, the rules of the game.

One sign of change is a modicum of press freedom. In the past, the Western press, with rare exceptions, had not been allowed into the kingdom. In the early days of the invasion, the local press could not even report it in unambiguous terms: it was referred to as "a disturbing episode" in Kuwait. Then King Fahd ibn Abd al-Aziz Al Saud eased local restrictions and reluctantly bowed to the need for the Western press to enter the country to help build international support for Desert Shield.

Like many reporters who have covered the Middle East, I was intrigued by the possibility of seeing Saudi Arabia, a country typically portrayed as a xenophobic Islamic theocracy that bars Jews and atheists from its territory; bans alcohol and cinemas, pork and pornography; frowns on unveiled women and forbids all women from driving and holding most jobs; chops off the hands of thieves and the heads of adulterers; and is awash in a sea of oil wealth. The Saudis allowed several hundred reporters into the Eastern Province, on the Persian Gulf side of the country, to cover the international deployment. I was not one of them, but, after weeks of entreaties at the Saudi Embassy, I managed to slip in by the back door, obtaining a visa for a brief visit to the old Red Sea port of Jeddah. From there I hoped to travel overland to the front.

Jeddah is Saudi Arabia's commercial center and gateway for the *haj*, the pilgrimage to nearby Mecca and Medina that is the duty of every Moslem who can afford it. Long before the city was a place of petro-dollars and high-stakes deals, it had thrived on the pilgrim trade. T. E. Lawrence in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, his account of the Arab revolt against Ottoman power in World War I, described Jeddah as a "white town below a blazing sky," where the noon sun, "like moonlight, put to sleep the colors. There were only lights and shadows, the white houses and black gaps of streets." Beyond the town was an empty expanse, "the dazzle of league after league of featureless sand, running up to an edge of low hills, faintly suggested in the far away mist of heat." Today, great gleaming blocks of office towers, shopping centers, and apartment complexes, blindingly white by day and embroidered in neon by night, cover much of the sands. Scattered amid the new are reminders of pre-modern Jeddah. Goats are tethered in the shaded alleys between ruined buildings. Cocks crow at dawn, awakened by the muezzin's call to *fajr*, morning prayer. Black-veiled women flit noiselessly through the streets. Lawrence's former home on the Jeddah lagoon, beside a fancy hotel, is a yellowed wreck; Egyptian workers lounge in its broken doorways and root about in the yard. Above it, a neon Kraft Cheese sign blinks in Arabic and English, and around the steamy skyline are other signs of the new Jeddah: Pepsi, Konica, Sony, Sharp, Sanyo.



Mecca, the birthplace of the prophet Muhammed and Islam, was seventy kilometers away—as close as this non-Moslem would ever get. Non-Moslems are barred from the holy city and its environs: a special beltway around the city is popularly known as "the Christian bypass." I had heard that a respected *imam* was preaching against the American presence in Saudi Arabia. Supporters were circulating cassette tapes of his sermons, as the Ayatollah Khomeini's supporters had done in the early days of the revolt against the Shah. I could not go to the Mecca *imam* but I found another, in Jeddah, who agreed to my request for an interview.

That an *imam* would talk frankly with a Western reporter is another small sign of shifting attitudes in the country. The *imam* confirmed that some religious leaders were upset about the deployment. He insisted that Saudi

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Arabia was a free country, and a misunderstood one. "I am free to criticize the Saudi government, to say ninety-nine percent of what I want in the mosque." Not so free, however, as to want his real name used. Let's call him Imam Asa.

A week later, Tarek Hamda of the *Detroit News* pulled off a coup by traveling to Mecca and interviewing Safar al-Hawali, the protesting *imam*. It was an important and little-noticed story—exactly the sort of journalism the Saudis didn't want emerging from the country. Hawali is not an obscure preacher; he is a leading Islamic theologian. Hamda obtained one of his taped sermons, in which Hawali says that "the animosity between Islam and the West is a matter of fact and will continue. Therefore, it is wrong that such Westerners be invited to defend us." It may seem like mild stuff to American ears, but to the Saudis it is a criticism both of the Western presence and—perhaps more importantly—of a decision of the Saudi monarchy.

"From a religious point of view," Imam Asa told me, "the Saudi leadership is not perfect. In strictly Islamic terms, it is a very grave error to have non-Moslem soldiers on Moslem land." Justification can be—and has been—found. Imam Asa pointed out that the Koran, like the Bible, is a tapestry of laws and tales, some immutable, some elastic. "So here you have a situation which seems to be against the Koran—the soldiers." Imam Asa adjusted the white *ghutra* on his head and smiled. "But in the Koran it also says that to eat pork is a sin, unless you are going to die and there is only pork. Then you eat pork, because it is a greater sin to starve yourself to death.

"Yes, some people here are very uncomfortable with the presence of unbelievers. However, another big problem is: our government was supposed to be strong enough to defend itself. . . . I myself was shocked to learn our army was only 65,000 men." The new press freedom has spurred widespread criticism in Saudi society. Why were the Americans called in so quickly? Why couldn't the Saudi army defend the country's borders? What about all those billions of dollars' worth of military equipment purchased over the years? Was the Saudi sword useless without the Western shield?

The heat of Jeddah was killing, and I would venture out only around dawn or dusk. The city was quiet, ghostly. Despite Saudi attempts to paint a picture of normality, religious and business travel was way down, hotel workers informed me. Yet it didn't feel like a city—or a country, for that matter—on a war footing. Most of Arab Saudi Arabia—away from the international compounds, embassies, military bases, and hotels—was a place of peculiar stillness, narrow and wary. Houses seemed eternally empty; behind half-opened windows, curtains flapped in darkened rooms. The climate was one not of fear, but of infinite caution. "Over there," my driver said to me one day as we sped past a stark minaret beside a palm-fringed plaza, "that is Chop-chop Square. For the punishments. You stay away."

"But in the Koran it also says that to eat pork is a sin, unless you are going to die and there is only pork. Then you eat pork, because it is a greater sin to starve yourself to death."

Finally, with a day left on my visa, I resolved to go to the airport and get on a plane for Dhahran, on the Persian Gulf. My requests to drive across the country had been turned down; I would never make it past all the checkpoints. A visa extension and travel permits were not forthcoming. I had been told I would need a transit permit and a letter from a Saudi "sponsor"—not to mention a valid visa—to fly to the Gulf and stay a few more weeks. I decided to gamble that there might be a bit of Middle Eastern flexibility (or chaos) at the airport, and that by mentioning my dear friend Prince Bandar, the Saudi ambassador to the U.S., and my other close personal acquaintances in the royal family, and by promising to resolve the unfortunate and inexplicable confusions in the matter of the visa immediately upon reaching Dhahran, where a representative of the royal family was at this very moment expecting me, I would succeed in boarding the plane. Besides, what was the worst that could happen? What would they do—chop off my writing hand?

At the airport, I was surrounded by a band of humorless security men. They examined my papers, frowned at my story, poked through my bags—the Koran I had helpfully placed atop my luggage seemed not to impress them—and, after a heated discussion among themselves, waved me through. On board, the pilot announced we would hear a travel supplication from the Prophet Muhammed, and there followed a deep Charlton Heston-like voice in mellifluous Arabic.

We climbed over the jagged gray escarpment of the Hijaz highlands. Mecca lay just to the south, Medina to the north. Soon the mountains leveled down to eerie black fields, old lava flows, skeined with patterns of salt lines. This was the "Arabian Shield," an ancient mass of igneous rock over a million years old. Here was the true heart of Islam and Arabia, a land indifferent to man's puny strugglings, territory that stripped life down to the absolute essentials before stripping it down to death. A little to the east, in the gravel-and-sand Najd plains we were approaching, the clan of Muhammed Ibn Saud allied two hundred years ago with the fundamentalist religious leader Muhammed ibn Abdul Wahab. Out of the alliance between Saud and Wahab, modern Saudi Arabia was slowly born, as the descendants of the House of Saud, preaching the strict doctrine of Wahabi Sunni Islam, eventually conquered and united the ornery tribes of the Arabian Peninsula.

Wahabi Islam still rules Saudi Arabia, and from it the House of Saud continues to derive its legitimacy. In one small sign of the endless efforts to bolster that legitimacy, King Fahd a few years ago changed his official title to "Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques" of Mecca and Medina. Lawrence wrote of Wahabism in *Seven Pillars*:

> Everything was forcibly pious or forcibly puritanical. It was a natural phenomenon, this periodic rise at intervals of little more than a century, of ascetic creeds in central Arabia. Always the votaries found their neighbors' beliefs cluttered with inessential things, which became impious in the hot imagination of their preachers. Again and again they had arisen, had taken possession, soul and body, of the tribes, and had dashed themselves to pieces on the urban Semites [Arabic-speakers], merchants and concupiscent men of the world. About their comfortable possessions the new creeds ebbed and flowed like the tides or the changing seasons, each movement with the seeds of early death in its excess of rightness. Doubtless they must recur so long as the causes—sun, moon, wind, acting in the emptiness of open spaces, weigh without check on the unhurried and unencumbered minds of the desert-dwellers.

The Saudis are now almost wholly an urban people, operating in an environment of wealth and modernity that Lawrence did not foresee and that may have mitigated Wahabism's rigor and postponed Lawrence's prediction of "early death." Yet I wondered if Wahabism, suddenly rich beyond belief and inextricably engaged with Western commerce, was coming to be seen by some in Saudi Arabia as itself cluttered with inessential things. Its asceticism, now urbanized, may no longer have the support of sun and wind acting in the emptiness of the desert. New voices are being raised against the culture that flows in behind Western commerce, against the troops, against Saudi decision-making. Where it will end I cannot tell. Perhaps the elasticity of the Koran will allow the House of Saud to adapt and manage change. Or perhaps Wahabism itself, along with the monarchy, will find itself dashed to pieces against a purer foe.

Below, the gravel plains had given way to great billowing hills of tan and red sand. A dune-blown highway cut beneath us; the pilot turned to parallel its track. At times a lonely ridge or isolated black peak would poke up from the dunes, and sand and sky seemed to merge at the horizon. There had been a number of military aircraft crashes recently, and it was said that the featureless landscape confused the pilots. I could see why. What a strange thing: to lose the sky. After a while the dunes receded and lone roads and scattered settlements began to appear. We had reached the Eastern Province. A few minutes to the north were Kuwait and the Iraqis. The plane banked out over the shallow turquoise waters of the Persian Gulf and touched down in Dhahran.

Within half an hour, I was climbing the hotel steps to the press center, the American-Saudi Joint Information Bureau (JIB). Virtually all my colleagues at the JIB, I would soon find, were living on expired visas. Soldiers in tan camouflage carrying M-16s and gas-mask kits mingled with Saudi officials in floor-length white *thobe* robes and denim-clad reporters. Fax machines, word processors, phones, and telexes hummed on tables. At one end of the carpeted hall, a group of Saudis, soldiers, and reporters were clustered intently around a wide-screen Sony television. News from the front? I hurried over. The screen exploded with violence—the Bruce Willis action-thriller, *Die Hard*.

A day later, I was at a military airbase in the desert. Giant C-5 cargo planes, painted in green camouflage, were offloading troops and supplies. A crescent moon hung in the dusky sky as a pair of British Tornado fighters maneuvered in the yellow band of sunset and helicopters beat around the base perimeter. A Tornado roared down the strip and lifted skyward, banking west, its afterburners aglow. "It's really pretty at night," said Army Lt. David Colson, pointing at the diamond shine of the Tornado engines. "Everybody here, our troops, are feeling pretty good. It was rough at first,

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but it's gotten cooler—made it easier on everyone. We work long days and nights and people get tired, grumpy, but we're proud of our mission."

He indicated a group of concrete hangars in the distance, beyond a fence. "Over there is the Saudi Air Force. We're not allowed to go there—they're very uptight about it. We have little contact with regular Saudi soldiers, although the officers we meet are nice. Of course, there are problems. They totally freaked out the first time they saw a woman driving a forklift." A squadron of U.S. F-15s swept low overhead, running silent, fast, ahead of their own sound. The rumble of the engines followed them and the sunset glinted silver on the cockpit hoods. They broke north in pairs, and we silently watched them disappear into the desert.

Officially, all is well in U.S.-Saudi military relations. Yet there are signs that the Saudis, more than four months after the invasion of Kuwait, are still taking a less than aggressive stance in defense of their own country. Few of the Saudi Air Force's approximately 180 combat planes have been seen in the skies. A draft has not been instituted; a much ballyhooed volunteer recruitment drive for the Saudi army has attracted, as far as televised footage of the trainees indicates, only several hundred paunchy enthusiasts in their early thirties who seem unable even to march in formation.

An American businessman with contacts in the Saudi military told me that much of the armament purchased over the years remains stored in secret underground bunkers. "Their army is not in a high state of preparedness," the businessman said, requesting anonymity out of fear of losing his lucrative work contracts. "As an American, it's disturbing to me. The sense in civilian life that we're being used as a tool by the Saudis applies to the military too"—a sentiment frequently expressed by expatriate workers. "It's almost like hiring a mercenary army."

The Saudi army may not be ready for anything, but at this point the U.S. forces seem ready for everything. The fighting forces are in place and so are the support units. "We're trained to handle mass casualties, that's our mission," said Col. Ken Steinweg, Hospital Commander of the 5th MASH unit. The Mobile Army Surgical Hospital is an air-conditioned complex of tents and folding metal shelters designed to move with a fighting division. "It's not fine surgery," said a medic. "It's meatball surgery. We're here to save lives."

The twenty-tent facility, with over sixty beds, two operating rooms, full hospital resources, and blood reserves for thousands of casualties, is a quick-response unit, able to expand or contract to meet the need. So far, problems have been minimal—heat-stroke, "adjustment-reaction" cases due to stress and isolation, and broken bones. The unit does a mass-casualty exercise every week. Many of the soldiers, said Col. Steinweg, "are apprehensive about chemical weapons. But all the chemical agents we know the Iraqi army to possess can be effectively treated. The chemicals can be reversed with antidotes. Ninety percent of chemical casualties will survive with proper treatment." The colonel spoke in one of the MASH tents, its walls glowing orange from the noon sun outside the canvas and a smell of disinfectant in the air. "These chemical agents," he said, "are more of a psychological weapon. Fear of chemical weapons is one of the ways the enemy tries to instill fear in a people it is trying to defeat."

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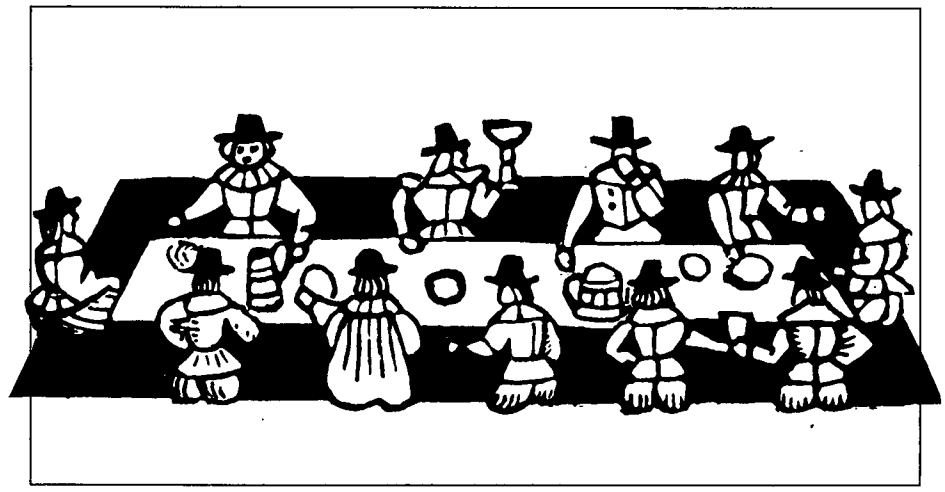
All fifteen of the American units I visited in Saudi Arabia were confident and optimistic. Of course, this is the new American army and, to judge from the copious Western coverage, one might get the impression it is also a feminist one. Lacking a good war to report on, the sensitive white males of the press corps have vastly exaggerated the military's female face. But the relatively few women in Saudi Arabia, like the men, voice little complaint. "I'd say the only problem," remarked Capt. Penny Moureau, "is we'd like to know how long we'll be here. We'd like to know if there will be a rotation policy." Her complaint was frequently echoed. In what surely must be an extraordinary situation, Capt. Moureau and her husband are both serving in Saudi Arabia—it also seems extraordinarily dumb. They left a three-month-old baby at home. "I write him letters and send him stories," Capt. Moureau said. "Peter Rabbit, that sort of thing. We left a tape in case something happens to us." She paused. "You must think of that."

An unanticipated problem concerns the small percentage of Islamic American soldiers, some of whom have been harassed by other American soldiers, said Chaplain Freitas of the MASH unit. "There are some soldiers who believe we are here to fight the forces of Islam, and cause problems for our Moslem soldiers. We deal with this by counseling that Islam is a legitimate faith and we Americans are a pluralistic society. We also ask the Islamic soldiers not to proselytize." Chaplain Freitas discounted reports in the Saudi press that twenty to thirty U.S. soldiers had converted to Islam. "We have had very few problems of a religious nature," he said, "considering the environment we function in." Jewish soldiers, he noted, are provided with extra security for their religious services. "The Saudis are very sensitive about this," my Army escort added.

The religions clustered behind Desert Shield are by no means the only oddity in the new alliance. Accompanying the press on several outings was Vladimir Beliakov, *Pravda*'s top Middle East correspondent. "Hey, *Pravda*!" exclaimed Captain Leland P. Humphrey, commander of a Patriot anti-aircraft missile battery. "Welcome, welcome!" A few years earlier, Capt. Humphrey had been in Europe, pointing his "Scud-buster" missiles at the Warsaw Pact and Beliakov's employers.



"If it flies, it dies," said Capt. Humphrey, coolly glancing around at his truck-mounted missiles, radio command post, and sand-bagged bunkers spread across an enormous parking lot. "We're the front line against Iraqi missiles and fighters." In one corner of the lot were hundreds of brand-new Toyota Land Cruisers and Mitsubishi autos—"the Japanese contribution to the war effort," someone commented.

Capt. Humphrey stood beside the missile battery while Beliakov, a battered white *Pravda* cap pushed down on his head, happily snapped pictures. "It's very isolated and lonely out here," Capt. Humphrey said, "but the support from the States is great. It's great to get letters, even from people you don't know. There's a big pen-pal campaign underway, and people send us all sorts of things. We really feel America supports us—and that's very important to us."

Apropos his former post, I mentioned that some observers were talking about a NATO-style defense compact for the region. "Compared to NATO," Capt. Humphrey said, "this is a very immature theater of operations. We still have a great deal of tactical development to do in the region, and that's aside from all the political problems. But everyone has a common interest here at the moment, common goals. Anything is possible." Capt. Humphrey may be proved wrong about "common goals" if large-scale combat erupts, but some people are looking at the possibility of a long-term stay. According to Saudi businessmen, American military contractors are negotiating long-term leases in the area. The Saudi government is not pleased.

After the Patriot tour, I took my engaging and no doubt KGB-approved colleague to lunch. Beliakov was one of the first Soviet journalists allowed into Saudi Arabia, and holds the post at one time occupied by Yevgeny Primakov, Gorbachev's top Middle East adviser. Beliakov is an Arabic-speaker and an expert on regional affairs, unlike most Western correspondents. He sees the Gulf crisis as intensifying the new Soviet role in the region, "a process that began with the withdrawal from Afghanistan and greater religious freedom for Moslems in the Soviet Union." In Beliakov's view, there is a new U.S. attitude toward Soviet involvement in the region. "When your Mr. Baker said he saw 'a positive role' for the Soviet Union in the area, this was very important. It was a negation of the old Kissinger policy of keeping us out." Now, perestroika drives Moscow's Middle East policy; economic relations are the key. Gorbachev's increasingly desperate bid to keep his country from bankruptcy and chaos remains a top concern. War disrupts this

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bid and sends what is from Moscow's view an ominous signal to the Moslem population inside its borders. And Primakov was not the only high-ranking Soviet in the area. Konstantin Katochev, the Soviet chief of the Foreign Trade Relations Ministry, had just completed the first visit of a Soviet minister to the Saudi capital. Among other things, the Saudis are interested in selling wheat and buying into Soviet military production lines; the Soviets are interested in Saudi help in petroleum production and development projects. The Katochev mission resulted in an agreement for direct trade between the Soviet Union and Saudi Arabia. Benefits thus already are flowing from Moscow's new "positive role," while the Kremlin continues to maintain close contacts with its old radical allies: the Syrians, the Libyans, the PLO, and Iraq itself.

As I spoke with the man from *Pravda*, tens of thousands of troops faced the enemy along the Saudi-Kuwait border. Behind the front waited the largest Western armies assembled in an imminent-hostilities situation in decades. The weather was cooling off: a good time for a desert war. A single incident, accidental or deliberate, could touch it off. Primakov was engaged in a high-profile series of meetings with Arab and Western leaders. The Soviets and the French were Iraq's main arms-suppliers and are leading the effort to save Saddam and avert a war. "If Gorbachev didn't see some sort of opportunity for a political compromise," Beliakov said, "Primakov wouldn't have been dispatched to the Western capitals for such high-level meetings. Saddam doesn't really want all of Kuwait. He wants the Rumaila oil strip and the islands of Bubiyan and Warbah" in the Kuwaiti north. He also wants to preserve his military power and political influence in the region. "And," said Beliakov, "he needs to save face."

The concern for Saddam's face is touching, but disingenuous. Gorbachev is outmaneuvering George Bush in the Gulf—the true meaning of the Primakov mission—by cynically being all things to all suitors. The Soviets, with their many "advisers" in Iraq, surely saw the August invasion coming and did nothing to stop it. The Nobel Peace Prize-winner keeps his military advisers in Iraq and elsewhere in the region, cultivating his influence with the various thugs running things. Primakov flutters around as Gorbachev's apostle of peace, burnishing the Kremlin leader's image in the West. Meanwhile, the Soviets are cutting deals like crazy. The ultimate deal: Moscow certainly will be well rewarded by Baghdad if it helps Iraq absorb northern Kuwait without a major war. At this point, the Saudis and others are likely to pay off Moscow too, in gratitude for a return to the status quo ante.

A bit of "face-saving" also would be on the American agenda, if the war clouds roll away. President Bush is justifiably proud of the international alliance he has assembled against Iraq. Yet it is an alliance with massive internal contradictions, unlikely to survive an outbreak of hostilities. Operation Desert Shield has among other things brought two of Israel's bitterest enemies, the Saudis and the Syrians, into an open regional alliance with Jerusalem's chief supporter, the United States. So far the Syrians are the big winners in this deadly game. They consolidated their grip on Lebanon by driving out the Christian rebel leader Gen. Michel Aoun, a move that included the well-reported murder of captive Christian soldiers, with hardly a peep from Washington. They have also seen their enemy Saddam Hussein put in a dangerous corner, yet have served notice on Washington, via Primakov, that they will not support the complete destruction of the Iraqi war machine, since it constitutes an important element in the front against Israel.

Saddam would gain much by dragging the Israelis into war and splitting Desert Shield unity. From Bush's point of view, the politics of Desert Shield—holding together the alliance and building a "new world order"—point to a deal. It seems to be shaping up like this: Saddam announces his willingness for a partial withdrawal from Kuwait in the interests of "the Arab nation"; Rumaila and the islands go to lengthy international arbitration; Western and Iraqi troops begin a withdrawal; an "arms embargo," a sop to concerns about Iraq's nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, replaces the total embargo; Saddam sets himself up as champion of the Palestinians, indicating that an international conference on the Arab-Israel dispute is in the offing—part of the package negotiated by Primakov and "indirectly" agreed to by Washington. War is avoided. Bush preserves his alliance, calculating that Americans will not support a conflict over a few hundred square miles of northern Kuwait and arguing that he is now in a better position to influence the Arab-Israeli "peace process" because of Desert Shield cooperation. Saddam keeps his military machine. "No compromise against aggression" goes the way of "No new taxes."

And what of a military solution to the Iraq stand-off? American officers in the field admire the Israelis and favor an Israeli-style quick strike against the Iraqis. This, in my view, is a fantasy. The scenario would likely resemble Israel's 1982 Lebanon debacle more than the Six-Day War. Air strikes alone will not impel the Iraqis to capitulate. Massive air strikes against Iraq likely would be coupled with a northeastward land drive from somewhere around the meeting point of the Saudi, Kuwaiti, and Iraqi borders, together with an amphibious assault on key positions in Kuwait City. The land forces would attempt to move fast to the Gulf, sealing Iraq's army inside Kuwait and cutting off its supply lines from Baghdad. Casualties would be horrendous, and we would have a desperate Iraqi army caught south of our new line and a chaotic Iraq to the north of it. If Baghdad did not surrender, we would then be faced with the need to move north for the capital, sustaining more casualties, while trying to grind down or starve out Iraqi forces in Kuwait. Meanwhile, Saddam would have launched his missiles at our forces and at Israel, unless we managed to take all of them out first.

The Saudi monarchy is fearful of Saddam, fearful of its own people, fearful of Western mores—pretty much in that order.

The reaction in the Arab world to the sight of Western forces moving on an Arab capital, with possible Israeli air action involved, would be explosive and complicated. Part of the complexity results from the mixed motives of our Arab allies. Some, such as the Syrians, are in the alliance to extend their regional influence and maim their rival, Saddam. Some, such as the Egyptians, are wary of both Syrian and Iraqi radicalism and want simply to chase the Iraqis out of Kuwait. Some, like the Kuwaitis, and the Saudis in the opening stages of the operation, want to blast Saddam and his war machine into the lowest circle of Hell. All the factions would have a different reaction to an extended land war. The Syrians, the Iranians, and Kurdish separatists might use the opportunity to attempt to seize parts of Iraq. Some Arab forces in Desert Shield might refuse to fight, leaving the Americans out on a diplomatic limb. Riots in support of Saddam would break out in the West Bank and Gaza, Cairo, Amman, and North Africa. Embassies and new hostages would be seized; current hostages would be executed.

Does President Bush possess the political will or the consensus to sustain weeks or even months of fighting to remove the Iraqi threat to the region? War is still quite possible, but it seems more likely that a deal will be struck and Israel will be left to grapple with international-conference pressure and a nuclear Iraq in the not-distant future. At the beginning of the crisis, the Saudi view was that the Americans would come in, quickly overwhelm the Iraqis, and clean the whole matter up by the end of August. That didn't happen, and events have spun out of control. The Saudi "street" sees the hasty call to the Americans for support as a disgraceful sign of panic by the House of Saud. The people know that the reason the Saudi military remains tiny and the sophisticated weapons stored away is that the royal family fears a powerful army that may one day throw a ring of tanks around the palace.

A coup certainly would have perked up the spirits of the foreign press corps encamped in some of Saudi Arabia's best hotels. By the time I left, my colleagues were quite dispirited. They had come expecting a war—some had even been looking forward to it—and now they were a disappointed lot, reduced to filing color pieces on such esoterica as the role of the woman in Saudi society and "the clash of cultures." Depression seemed to be creeping in, exacerbated by an absence of alcohol.

Still, the few hundred reporters were making the Saudis nervous, and lists of journalists with expired visas were being posted in the press center, asking them to check in with the Saudi Ministry of Information. Few did, of course. Weeks after my visa expired, I headed for the airport. Fighters streaked through the sky, missile batteries stood guard, and the machine gun–toting security men waved me through without batting an eye. As the plane took off, the only thing that marred the picture of a prosperous and secure Saudi Arabia was a black cloud from a refinery fire rolling in the northern horizon. But now I knew that Saudi security was riven by paradox and illusion. The House of Saud, wrapped in its trapping of Islamic purity, is unhappy with the increased flow of Decadent Culture and Dangerous Ideas coming in along with Operation Desert Shield. The Saudi monarchy is fearful of Saddam, fearful of its own people, and fearful of Western mores—pretty much in that order. But now they are caught in a trap. For without the Desert Shield, the Saudis' sword would be broken and buried in the sand. □

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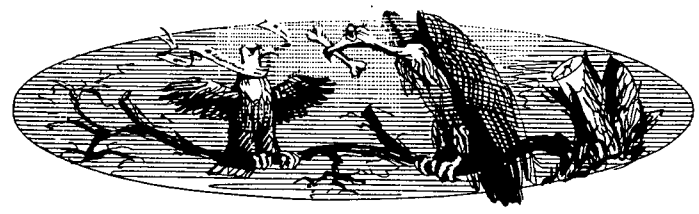

BUSING'S COMEBACK

by Charlotte Allen

When I recently read that the Supreme Court was going to decide whether, after twenty-nine years, a federal district court can terminate jurisdiction over a public-school busing case, I thought of a Los Angeles family whom I'll call the Gomezes. In 1978, the school district there, 710 square miles large, was in its fifteenth year of litigating a desegregation case. Under the thumb of a county judge, the district had set up a mandatory busing plan that would swap around stated percentages of black, Hispanic, and "Anglo" pupils in grades four through eight in order to achieve "racial balance" at most of its 650 or so schools.

The Gomezes' main problem was figuring out what race to call themselves. Blue-eyed, redheaded Shakespeare-quoting Gomez *père*, a lawyer, was half Irish, half Guatemalan. Mrs. Gomez, a schoolteacher, was of Anglo-Saxon stock but tawny of skin. What about ten year-old blond honor student Gomez *fils*? If he called himself Hispanic, he would have to board a bus and head out twenty miles to lend "balance" to a school in a largely white section of the west San Fernando Valley. If he called himself white, he could walk four blocks to lend "balance" to a school in his own mostly Mexican neighborhood.

He decided to be white. His mother, with not a drop of south-of-the-border blood in her veins but with an Iberian surname courtesy of her marriage certificate, classified herself as Hispanic so she could continue lending "balance" to the mostly white school where she had taught for years. She thus avoided being sent elsewhere under a rigidly racial teacher-transfer program. So the Gomez family made out pretty well by busing, including Mrs. Gomez's sister, divorced and sole support of three youngsters, who got a job driving one of the buses. The pay and hours beat those at her previous job, tending bar.

Charlotte Allen is a senior editor of Insight.

Mandatory busing inflamed Los Angeles residents—middle class Valleyites, parents in the city's tightly knit Mexican and Chinese neighborhoods, and many blacks who similarly preferred to have their youngsters go to school close to home. The city's voters held a recall election and threw out of office a school board president who had refused to contest key pro-busing rulings.

One reason for the resentment was that there had never been a clear-cut court finding that the Los Angeles school system had ever engaged in intentional, or *de jure*, segregation by race. A trial judge in 1970 found elements of *de jure* segregation. But the kind of evidence the judge relied on—the district's failure to site new schools in a way that would ensure racially mixed student bodies—was insufficient to support a *de jure* finding under the federal Constitution, the Supreme Court later held in a different case. To find a violation of the federal equal protection clause, there had to be evidence that a school district actually intended to set up separate schools for different races.

Unlike most school desegregation cases, however, the Los Angeles case was filed not in federal court but in state court. The California Supreme Court reviewed the case in 1976 and said that, as far as the state constitution was concerned, it made no difference whether the segregation in Los Angeles was *de jure* or merely *de facto*. Whatever the cause of segregation, a school district had to take affirmative steps to uproot it.

To get around that sweeping ruling, California voters in 1979 approved Proposition 1, which banned mandatory busing as a court-ordered remedy unless there was a finding of *de jure* segregation under federal standards. Meanwhile, Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Paul Egly came to the conclusion that busing grades four through eight was not enough. He imposed a massive "multi-ethnic" plan involving grades one through twelve throughout much of the 600,000-pupil district, with some bus rides lasting up to an hour and a half. This new plan was to be phased in starting in the fall of 1980.

In December 1980, the school board won an appellate ruling halting the Egly plan on the basis of Proposition 1. On March 11, 1981, the California Supreme Court announced that it would let the ruling stand. The school board could not get rid of mandatory busing fast enough. By April 20, 1981, the first day of school after spring vacation, most of the pupils were back at their neighborhood schools, and the district launched a system of voluntary busing and magnet schools that persists to this day. On June 30, 1982, the U.S. Supreme Court, in an 8-1 vote, upheld the constitutionality of Proposition 1.

This did not mean that mandatory busing was a dead issue in Los Angeles. Just before busing was scheduled to wind down in April 1981, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's now independent legal defense fund broke ranks with the American Civil Liberties Union, which had been handling the suit, and filed a separate suit in federal court. The NAACP fund suit named both the school district and the state of California as defendants in an intentional scheme to perpetuate segregation. The aim was to secure a "metropolitan" busing order that would have shuttled thousands of children to and from the city's outlying suburbs, bringing more whites into the system. That suit languished until 1989, when the school district won a dismissal on the grounds that the case's central issue—intentional discrimination—had already been litigated in the state suit almost two decades previously.

It took twenty-six years, from the Kennedy Administration to the Bush Administration, to litigate school desegregation in Los Angeles. *Cui bono*? During those years, the school system passed from being about 60 percent white to just 14 percent white. The percentage of blacks had also fallen from nearly 25 percent during the 1970s to 18 percent. Hispanics n w make up the majority of Los Angeles pupils. Burgeoning immigration and a high Hispanic birth rate have made the district one of the few urban school systems to gain population instead of lose it during recent years; there are about 50,000 more pupils than a decade ago.

Fifteen years ago, there were overturned buses, parents with pickets,

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groups with names like Bustop (sic) and the Citizens Legal Defense Alliance. Now, there is silence. The reason is that those who know how to complain effectively—whites and middle-class blacks—have either moved to the suburbs or paid their way out of the system. Along with the middle-class Valleyites who fought busing ten years ago, most of the Westside limousine liberals who *backed* it now send their children to private schools. While those who can afford it buy their way out, underclass kids just drop out or stay at home. Such is the legacy of busing everywhere in the United States; on a good day in Brooklyn, the absentee level is 33 percent. The public school system is no longer for us; it is for "them."

About five hundred school districts around the country still have court-ordered integration plans in place, and virtually every major U.S. city—Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Denver, Detroit, New Orleans, St. Louis, Washington—has gone through a similar pattern over the past three decades. First, during the 1960s or 1970s came the class-action lawsuit, filed by the Justice Department during the years of Democratic administration activism, by the NAACP's legal fund or the ACLU during Republican off-years. Then came the inevitable finding of a "dual" school system and the bitterly fought busing order. A long period of turmoil followed as whites moved away in droves. Now we have a decayed and demoralized school system overwhelmingly minority in composition. An occasional federal judge, surveying the wreckage, has let a city off the busing hook, as has happened in Boston and in Washington (the latter system, 95 percent black, has entirely given up and now lets a few white-majority schools operate).

Twenty-five, thirty years in court is a blink of an eye for a school desegregation case. The original school case, *Brown* v. *Board of Education*, contesting a requirement of separate schools for whites and blacks in Topeka, Kansas, was filed in 1951. Although the Topeka school district abolished its formal school color line in the wake of two Supreme Court rulings in 1954 and 1955, *Brown* is still being litigated thirty-nine years later, with a federal appeals court ruling awaiting the Supreme Court's decision whether to grant review. The issue now is "resegregation" and whether the Court has an obligation to respond to shifting neighborhood residential patterns that have led to all-black schools.

The case currently before the Supreme Court, *Board of Education of Oklahoma City* v. *Dowell*, is archetypal. A group of black parents filed the original suit in federal district court in 1961, under the auspices of the NAACP fund. The Oklahoma City ordinances had for years restricted blacks from living in all but the eastern part of the city. In 1960, 80 percent of Oklahoma's blacks still lived in the old segregated-by-law section of town. After *Brown*, the city dropped formal school segregation in favor of a neighborhood plan but forbade black youngsters from transferring from black-majority to white-majority schools, although they were free to transfer from white-majority to black-majority schools if they wished. Changing this clearly racist policy was the main aim of the original suit.

As the years went on, the Supreme Court gave its blessing not just to the jettisoning of official segregation but to the taking of affirmative steps to bring about integration, including race-based busing. In 1972, under court order, Oklahoma City set up a complex plan to bus black children into white neighborhoods for the first four grades, white children into black neighborhoods for fifth grade, and children of both races after that. If a neighborhood became residentially desegregated, its school could drop out of the system. After five years of busing, the district court declared in 1977 that Oklahoma City had a "unitary" system that no longer institutionalized racial discrimination and ceased actively supervising the schools.

The number of youngsters attending public school in Oklahoma City fell by almost half during the first decade of busing—from nearly 69,000 to about 40,000. During the early 1970s, the pupil population was three-fourths white, one-fourth black. By 1986, it was 47 percent white, 40 percent black, and 13 percent "other minority" (Hispanic and Asian). Parental involvement in school affairs had dropped precipitously over the years. During the early 1970s, there were ninety-four parent-teacher associations in Oklahoma City, with 25,000 members. By 1985, PTAs numbered only fourteen, with fewer than 5,000 members. Blacks were by then living all over the city, with only 17 percent of the black population still confined to the east side. So many schools had qualified as naturally desegregated and dropped out of the program that bus rides for blacks were growing ever longer.

In 1985, the city adopted a neighborhood school program for grades one through four (with transfers available for any minority youngster who wanted one), while retaining mandatory busing for higher grades. The new plan has improved black pupils' test scores, the school board says, and PTA membership and other parental involvement have shot up. Although there is black support for the neighborhood concept (one black parent gathered 400 signatures on a petition to that effect), the NAACP fund has not been pleased, pointing out that, under the new plan, because blacks and whites still mostly live in racially segregated neighborhoods, 46 percent of the city's blacks have become clustered in eleven virtually all-black schools out of a total of sixty-four.

The NAACP fund has its own proposal: more busing than ever. Under a convoluted plan devised by University of Miami professor Gordon Foster, large numbers of pupils, black and white, in grades one through four would be back on the buses, some having to change schools three times by the time they got to grade five. The issue before the Supreme Court is whether the federal district court, having declared the Oklahoma City school system "unitary" thirteen years ago, has the jurisdiction to reopen the case and order the board to adopt the Foster Plan. If the court jurisdiction continues, it means that a school busing order stays in effect forever, or at least until the day when ethnic neighborhoods no longer exist. Justice Sandra Day O'Connor wanted to know whether Oklahoma City would still be under a busing order a hundred years from now if residential segregation persisted. The answer of Julius Chambers, the NAACP fund's legal director, was yes.

Many blacks, the putative beneficiaries of busing, have come to regard it as a punishment of which white children should bear their fair share. The school system in Indianapolis, scene of a 28-year-old desegregation suit that has been accompanied by the loss of more than half the city's public-school population, has been busing about 6,000 youngsters out of black neighborhoods into surrounding suburbs since 1981. Although the number of grades involved in the inter-district program has steadily increased over the last nine years, the total number of children participating has not—indicating that at least some black youngsters are likely sneaking out of the program into schools closer to home. The NAACP, once an active player in the Indianapolis case, refuses to have anything to do with the one-race busing. "It puts the black children at risk twice," says A. D. Pinckney, an Indianapolis dentist who heads the local NAACP's education committee. They suffer all the disabilities of growing up in the underclass and "they're looked at as interlopers in the suburbs."

Indeed, what black parents seem to want nowadays is not the dubious honor of having their children sit next to whites but the right to choose a school that can offer their kids the best education, no matter where it is or who else goes there. A Gallup poll conducted earlier this year for the *Phi Beta Kappan*, an educational journal, indicated that 72 percent of non-whites supported public school choice, as opposed to 60 percent of whites. The bigger the community, the stronger the support. Racial and ethnic considerations ranked low on a list of considera-

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tions the respondents said they would have in picking a school. Quality of teaching, discipline, and curriculum content were at the top.

One recent disturbing move in big cities has been setting up "Afrocentric" curricula, which strongly promote black separatism. In fact, separate classes for black boys, not necessarily Afrocentric but headed by black male teachers with a mission to show that learning isn't just for sissies, have the backing of several high-profile black commentators and theorists. Civil rights professionals strongly object, but there is something to be said for all-male classes—for boys of all races—in a society where fathers at home are becoming rarer.

School choice is gaining momentum in the state legislatures and at the ballot boxes; its highest-profile proponent is Annette "Polly" Williams, a liberal black Democratic state legislator in Milwaukee, who successfully fought for a voucher plan that allows low-income families to send their children to private schools. (The future of the voucher program is now in doubt, however. In November, a Wisconsin appellate court overturned it on a technicality in a lawsuit filed by angry educational bureaucrats.) Williams, who opposes busing, says, "Racial balance is a joke in Milwaukee," where 70 percent of pupils are black. Williams is a black separatist, but her separatism seems to derive from disgust with white liberals.

Court-ordered busing programs now seem crude, lumbering, archaic, top-down, potentially totalitarian arrangements. Only in a handful of areas, such as Delaware, where the entire state has been transformed into a single school district with two-thirds of the children riding buses in order to bring whites to Wilmington schools, has anything remotely like racial balance been achieved. In most areas, "you end up busing blacks from black schools to black schools," says University of Texas law professor Lino Graglia, author of *Disaster by Decree*, a chronicle of busing nightmares across the country. But tell that to the civil rights establishment, the NAACP, and the ACLU.

In 1986, the Supreme Court let a lower court close a case that had led to mandatory busing in Norfolk, Virginia, since 1971. The Justice Department had filed the original suit, and the Reagan Administration's civil rights chief, William Bradford Reynolds, did not contest Norfolk's efforts to terminate court supervision on grounds that it had at last achieved a unitary system. After the Norfolk victory, Reynolds's department wrote letters to school systems around the country offering help in getting rid of busing orders. The NAACP fund fired off sharply worded letters to the school boards threatening to litigate any such moves to the hilt. Few districts took up Reynolds's invitation.

Perhaps it is time now to think about the original *Brown* case. Oliver Brown, who repaired boxcars for the Santa Fe Railroad, objected that his eight-year-old daughter, Linda, had to walk six blocks through the railroad switching yard, then catch a bus for a half-hour ride to a Topeka school designated for black children, when she could have walked seven blocks in the other direction to one reserved for whites. Chief Justice Earl Warren's 1954 ruling was glazed with fifties psychobabble about the "feeling of inferiority" that segregation generates, but President John F. Kennedy said it better later when he called the dropping of racial barriers "a moral issue." It was a question of justice, written into the Constitution by the Fourteenth Amendment's equal protection clause. Three and a half decades later, it is all but forgotten that the *Brown* decision distinctly rejected the idea of forcibly transporting someone to a distant school on the basis of race. □

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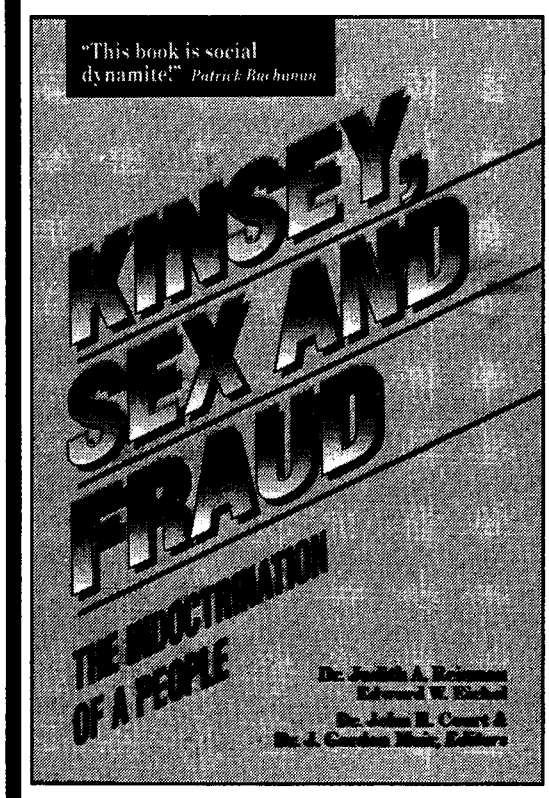

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MOSCOW À GO-GO

by Cathy Young

Travelers who have noted a pleasant change in the manners of guards at Soviet border checkpoints—from "What are you doing in our country, imperialist pig?" scowls to "How nice of you to come!" smiles—credit the new guidelines issued to the young soldiers manning the glass booths at Sheremetyevo Airport. True enough. However, border guards are certainly not directed to ask a Soviet-born American visitor, "So how's life in America—better than here, uh?" And when the guest, having acknowledged the fact, tries to be nice and adds that the USSR is a very interesting place to visit, it is unlikely that the new guidelines call for the border guard to respond, with a puzzled, almost pitying look, "Well, what's so interesting about it?"

Such, at any rate, was my welcome when I arrived in Moscow for the "Transition to Freedom" conference, organized by the libertarian Cato Institute. Among the American speakers were Charles Murray, James Buchanan, and George Gilder; on the Soviet side, Moscow's radical mayor Gavriil Popov, his Leningrad counterpart Anatoly Sobchak, and some well-known free-market economists—all three of them. Stanislav Shatalin, author of the 500-day reform plan, was too busy to attend. There were the usual mishaps associated with holding conferences in what is generally not a user-friendly city. Because of the "Two-Plus-Four" meetings taking place on the reunification of Germany, we were bounced at the last minute from the deluxe Oktyabrskaya hotel to one located on the godforsaken outskirts of the city.

This did not deter the Russians from attending. Not that all were satisfied; quite a few had come with dollar signs in their eyes (and I don't mean Ayn Rand's mystical visions) and saw the word "American" in combination with "businessman," not "intellectual." That *these* Americans were interested in free-market theory rather than practice was not easy to explain. The shrewd-looking, oily co-owner of an electronics consulting center (who, asked if he had any desire to emigrate, patted me on the shoulder and pronounced, "My dear, have you ever heard of a gold prospector leaving the Klondike at the very start of the gold rush?") told me that if the Americans were here to convince the Russians of the benefits of the free market, they were wasting their time—the Russians were already convinced. What they needed was advice on *how* to privatize the economy.

Not surprisingly, the short paper delivered by Paul Craig Roberts, which actually outlined a privatization plan, was a hit; the Russian-language copies were quickly snatched up, leaving many would-be readers vocally unhappy. A Cato Institute book on deregulation was also an object of interest, as was, for that matter, all the literature brought by Americans—even when it was in English. Those members of the audience who were not yet consumed by the gold fever were impressed by Charles Murray, who spoke of how an egalitarian state with cradle-to-grave social protection robs men and women of responsibility for their own lives and thereby of true happiness. And George Gilder even found some long-time Russian fans: Larisa Piyasheva and her husband Boris Pinsker, economists who had read *Wealth and Poverty* and were ecstatic to have an autographed copy.

To introduce Soviets (including managers, journalists, college instructors of economics, and the like) to the thinking of Americans who are not John Kenneth Galbraith was a great idea—though it would have been helpful to explain not only free-market theory but the real-life failures of the Scandinavian welfare state, still a potent lure to all too many Russians who reject Communism. Some of the Beltway libertarians were excited by the idea that the Soviet Union, with its "advantage" of starting from scratch, was in a position to build a purer capitalism than the adulterated Western version. This would make perfect sense except for such inconvenient facts as the dire poverty in which so many Soviets live and the resulting demands for a strong safety net. ("Do you mean," a Moscow TV reporter pressed Cato president Ed Crane, "that our capitalism will be better because it can incorporate our achievements in social guarantees?")

Seduced by the Milton Friedmanite rhetoric so popular in Moscow these days, American free-market enthusiasts often fail to see that most of these Russian Friedmanites favor a mixed economy and fairly large social programs. The reason they sound so radical is that *their* point of departure is total statism. So we get what Gettysburg College economist Edwin Dolan, who now teaches a business course at Moscow State University, aptly described as Jeffersonian rhetoric and Swedish substance.

Other misunderstandings were even richer in irony. Pinsker lashed out scathingly at Ralph Raico, professor of history at State University College at Buffalo, for characterizing the U.S. military as a parasite sucking the life out of the American taxpayer: "We are here in this room together not least because your country was willing to back its moral fortitude and devotion to the ideals of freedom with military might, and not only to fight for its principles and ideals but also to spend enormous amounts of money on this." Some of the Americans looked as if they were witnessing a disastrous public *faux pas*. On the other hand, most of the Russians seemed to agree with Pinsker.

Economist Vasily Selyunin scoffed at attempts by one or two American speakers to prove that Marx was no enemy of free enterprise, ostensibly in order to make the latter more palatable to the Soviets. Reversing roles, "progressive" communist Otto Latsis chided Charles Murray for failing to see that Marx and Lenin were *not* champions of egalitarianism and that freedom of initiative and individual responsibility were perfectly compatible with socialism. He did not define the latter. A sarcastic deputy of the Moscow City Council later quipped, alluding to Orwell's *Animal Farm*, that Latsis offered a fine example of a creature in the process of re-education from "Four legs good, two legs bad" to "Four legs good, two legs better."

The re-education of Soviets at times takes bizarre turns. At the opening-night banquet, welcoming remarks by the mayors of Moscow and Leningrad were followed by a floor show in which the dancers were losing more and more of their clothes from one number to the next, until they were left in G-strings and fish-net tops. This spectacle, in a way, epitomized the Soviets' rush to emulate all things Western without any understanding of the context—of the fact that what goes in a go-go bar may not go at a conference on the free market. Or maybe it's just

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Cathy Young, our Soviet Presswatch columnist, is the author of Growing Up in Moscow *(Ticknor & Fields).*

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that the Russians, starting as they are from scratch, can achieve a more perfect sexual revolution than we have.

Two days after the conference, I was carrying on the good fight, marching in a huge rally staged to protest the moderate reform plan presented by Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov and demand his resignation. My Soviet relatives had tried to talk me out of it: protest rallies in Moscow are reputed to be a dangerous activity. I suffered no worse damage than a bad cold from a two-hour trek in the damp, chilly weather, a small price to pay for the opportunity to yell "Down with the KGB!" in the very heart of Moscow—a delicious feeling but something that it would be unwise to try solo.

For a few hours, tens of thousands of ordinary Moscow men and women had gained a sense of power, at least power to defy: the victory of unity over fear. Hundreds of large red-white-and-blue flags—the colors of free Russia—flapped wetly over the crowd, and enterprising young fellows were selling smaller ones. Spectators, some also with tricolors, waved from windows and balconies and shouted greetings. Sales clerks in their dingy white smocks came out of the stores and cafes and stood on the sidewalk gaping with no discernible expression except curiosity. The police stood on the sidelines, reacting with equanimity to something that most certainly hadn't been part of their police academy training. Some were grinning at cheeky posters bobbing over the motley stream of heads and umbrellas, such as a drawing of the Lenin mausoleum with a sign over the entrance saying, "BEER." One handmade poster proclaimed, "For wrecking the economy Ryzhkov should get the firing squad!" Other slogans were less bloodthirsty but just as forthright: "Communism is the Plague of the 20th Century," "Communist Party, Give Your Loot Back to the People," "Down With Communist Ministers," "Put the CPSU on Trial," "The Supreme Soviet of the USSR is a Fig Leaf over Bolshevist Obscenity," and one to gladden the hearts of the Cato crowd: "We Support Immediate Privatization of Property!" "I wonder how many of these people actually know what they want," I said to my companion for the day, a cub reporter for the Russian-language Latvian newspaper *Baltic Times*. The young man giggled mischievously. "That's the kind of question independent journalists aren't supposed to ask."

A moment of irony was provided by a road sign over a short tunnel through which the marchers passed at one point, a bizarre consequence of the Communist rulers' passion for slapping revolutionary names on everything: "Insurrection Square—1 km." However, the column took a different route and peacefully reached Manezhnaya Square, right by the walls of the Kremlin. I left soon after the speeches began, but not before witnessing the world record for flip-flopping. Victor Aksyuchits, a Christian Democrat deputy in the Russian parliament, called on the people, in the spirit of goodwill they had (according to him) exhibited at the rally, to give the Ryzhkov government one more chance. Drowned out by a storm of howls and boos, he quickly wrapped up his speech by shouting, "Ryzhkov must resign!"

As I walked toward the nearest open metro stop, a well-dressed, soft-spoken woman heading the same way heaved a doleful sigh and said, "It's all very scary. . . . There are devils out there, you know."

"What do you mean, devils?" I asked uneasily, wondering if I was being accosted by a lunatic.

"Just that. Forces of darkness," she explained, with no demented intensity in her voice, just quiet desperation. "You know what this means? Something very dangerous is going to be set loose, and blood is going to flow, and we are all going to weep and weep a lot . . . "

Something moved me to tell her that I lived in the United States, and she gasped and wailed, "Oh, how *lucky* you are! Oh, *how* lucky you are!" Did I know what it was like? Had I seen the empty shelves in the stores, the lines. . . ? She had to shop on the farm market, and the 1,000-ruble monthly salary she was earning at a cooperative was barely enough to survive . . . I was back from the world of people power to a world that may seem too absurd to be called real but nonetheless is so to most Muscovites most of the time, except for the 1,000-ruble salary: the average person earns about one-fifth of that.

These days, conversations in the homes of educated professionals in Moscow almost inevitably turn to the food problem, and one feels rather awkward when people start making hunger jokes. ("We don't know if we'll end up eating Jessie this winter or she will end up eating us," said the owner of a rather skinny black Labrador.) For them to laugh about it is sportsmanlike; for someone like myself—soon to be sauntering down the aisles of Shop-Rite—it's rather tactless, though to set oneself apart and *not* laugh would be even worse. I was spared embarrassment when, having finished a small chicken cutlet, I was about to ask for seconds—and just then, my hostess

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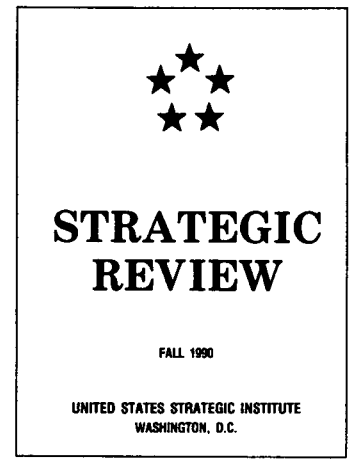

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apologetically explained that half a chicken per person had been given out the day before at the school where she worked, and she had pleaded for a whole chicken on the basis of the fact that her husband and her son worked at the same school, but to no avail. Now they were being offered a chance to go out into the fields and pick their own potatoes for the winter (the understaffed farms lacking the hands to harvest this year's record crop), but no one in the family was of particularly strong build, and they had no car to transport the potatoes and no room to store them . . . And the neighborhood bakery had a notice posted on the door, a sort of artless *cri de coeur*: BAKERY CLOSED. BREAD SOLD OUT. NOTHING LEFT.

The last part of this may soon apply to the Communist party of the Soviet Union, which its members are leaving in droves. At the school where my friend had received the half chicken, the head of the staff party bureau and her deputy had turned in their party cards. When I mentioned this to another acquaintance, she said, "Oh, then I know the school; that's where my niece works." It turned out they were talking about different schools.

The question, as an American friend of mine points out, is whether the Soviets will be able to build up something new before they are crushed by the chunks of the old structures as they crumble. And, I might add, whether there will be anyone left to do the building. A hackneyed Lenin quote, "Communism equals Soviet power plus the electrification of the entire country," has been updated into "Communism equals Soviet power plus the *emigration* of the entire country." With America virtually out of reach, many non-Jewish Russians are looking to the promised land of . . . South Africa, rumored to be seeking to boost its white population through immigration (emphatically denied, I should add, by a South African consular official I contacted in New York).

Two days before my flight back, I was walking from the Arbat, a colorful pedestrian mall where I had listened to a street poet recite anti-Communist doggerel to a laughing, clapping crowd; had my picture taken with a cardboard cutout of Gorby, which I must say looked more alive than his predecessors had in the flesh; and turned away two eleven- or twelve-year-old kids in American clothes and sneakers who were trying to sell me badges for dollars. And then, on a small cross street, I saw a curious sight: a tent on the lawn and a banner hanging on an iron grill fence, proclaiming in huge spray-painted letters, in English, THE USSR STOPPED TESTING—WHEN SHALL WE? and the same in much smaller Cyrillic. Intrigued, I peered into the tent. Out crawled a man in his fifties, who introduced himself as a West Coast peace activist named Norbert. The yellow mansion behind the fence, he explained, was the residence of the U.S. ambassador, where Norbert had been camping out (the U.S. Embassy being off-limits) for *four months*, renewing his Soviet visa through personal invitations from Russian peacenik friends.

I had to say something, so I managed this: "Well, it's a tough time for the Soviet people, but it's very interesting to be here these days." The first part went right past dear old Norbert, who nodded and proudly informed me that he had just participated in the international peace march in Kazakhstan. The marchers must have failed to convey their message, since the latest reports from that area have Kazakhs and ethnic Russians bashing each other's heads with blunt objects. But what is that to the true idealist, who worries about peace on a global scale? Some things never change; in an age of permanent revolution, that may be a comfort. ☐

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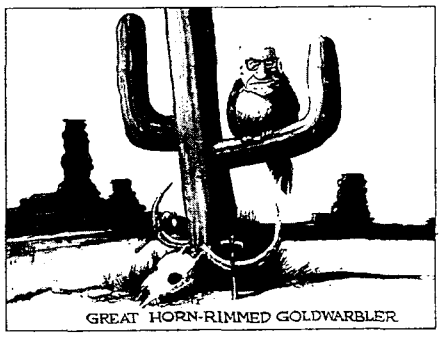

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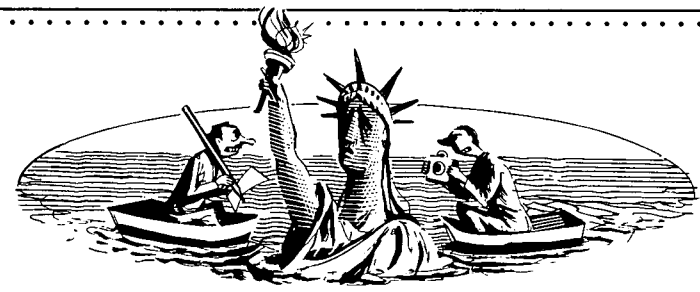

THE SUNDAY SOAPS

by Terry Eastland

In Houston the day before the mid-term elections, George Bush lit into the Washington-based "talk shows," pronouncing them "tiring" and accusing the "pundits" who appear on them of negativity. This obviously wasn't enough to turn the tide in favor of Clayton Williams in the Texas gubernatorial race (won by Democrat Ann Richards). But it inspired me to join the President in the critic's corner. After all, everything else on television is reviewed, so why not the talk shows? The three best-known shows are the Sunday offerings—"Meet the Press" (NBC), "Face the Nation" (CBS), and "This Week With David Brinkley" (ABC). I examined the programs of October and early November that dealt with domestic politics, and thus the budget business and the elections.

For those who do not watch these shows—which is to say most of the population outside Washington, a point the President would do well to remember—all three are interview programs in which one or more journalists fire questions at someone in the (Washington) "news." The shows conclude with a short segment (as much as ten minutes on "This Week," sometimes just ten seconds on "Face the Nation") in which the journalists opine (i.e., commit the punditry Bush dislikes), the interviewees having departed the scene.

"Meet the Press," the oldest of the programs, is now hosted by Garrick Utley, who is joined by two journalists. On the four shows I examined, David Broder of the *Washington Post* made three appearances, while Alan Murray (*Wall Street Journal*), Robert Novak (*Chicago Sun-Times*), Elizabeth Drew (*New Yorker*), Tim Russert (NBC News), and Andrea Mitchell (also of NBC) made one each. The "guests" or interviewees included White House Chief of Staff John Sununu, on the budget negotiations; Sen. George Mitchell, on the budget "crisis"; Vice President Dan Quayle, on the budget agreement and the elections; and Rep. Richard Gephardt and Sununu (again), on the elections.

"Face the Nation" is Lesley Stahl's exclusive labor. Her guests included Richard Darman of the Office of Management and Budget, Alan Murray (an interviewee this time), and Kevin Phillips, identified as a "political analyst"; Vice President Quayle (another busy man); Jerry Brown, chairman of the California Democratic party, and Haley Barbour, a Republican National Committeeman from Mississippi; Darman (again) plus several members of Congress running for office; Ron Brown (chairman of the Democratic National Committee) and Charles Black (speaking for the Republican National Committee), and John Silber and William Weld, the gubernatorial candidates in Massachusetts.

"This Week With David Brinkley" runs for an hour—twice as long as "Meet the Press" and "Face the Nation." David Brinkley of ABC is the host; he's usually joined by Sam Donaldson and George F. Will, and on occasion by Cokie Roberts. On the Sundays I watched the guests were Sen. Lloyd Bentsen; Darman, Gephardt, and Rep. Newt Gingrich; Sununu, Brown, Phillips, and Michael Barone, author of *The Almanac of American Politics*; and Ed Rollins (of the National Republican Congressional Committee), plus the gubernatorial candidates in Florida (Gov. Bob Martinez and Lawton Chiles) and Massachusetts (Silber and Weld).

It is, by the way, characteristic of the Sunday shows that quite often they seek the same people. Sometimes, in fact, as on November 4, when Silber and Weld managed to appear on both "Face the Nation" and "This Week With David Brinkley," the same people are on more than one show. (A hat trick has sometimes been achieved, and public affairs offices in Washington take great pride when they score a three-in-one.)

Many of the questions on the shows I watched were posed sharply, and when answers were imprecise or evasive, the questioners were sometimes persistent. There were also many obvious questions that anyone could have posed, such as what kind of tax rate might the President accept, how many seats will the respective parties win or lose, and so on. But if there's a reason to call the shows "tiring," it has to do with certain kinds of questions that are the Washington journalist's stock in trade. Whoever goes on the network shows—or comes to work in official Washington—had better prepare himself for these.

One is what I call the Couch or Confessional question, asked of

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Terry Eastland is resident fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C.

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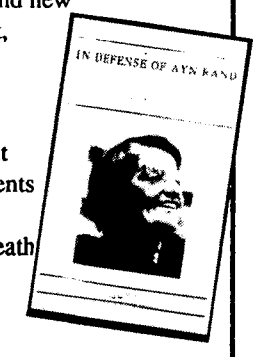

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someone whom the interrogator evidently thinks should have learned some "personal" lesson. Thus Sununu, on the October 14 "Meet the Press," was asked by David Broder, in regard to the budget negotiations: "What have you learned from this experience"? When Sununu ignored the personal thrust of the question by answering, "That Congress does not like summitry," Broder followed up: "Have you learned anything about the way you do your job?" (Sununu sidestepped him again.) Two weeks later, Sununu, on "This Week," was asked by David Brinkley, "What have you learned from [the budget fiasco]?" Sununu gave a bland answer. A week after that, Sununu, back for more meeting the press on NBC, was asked by Andrea Mitchell: "In this fall campaign, did you make any mistakes at all . . . in strategy?" Sununu answered, "Andrea, we all make mistakes," before going on to commit one by confessing, "I've made mistakes." Mitchell quickly leaped in: "Can you name one?" At this point Sununu recognized that he had finally been shoved inside the confessional booth. "I wouldn't tell you, Andrea," he said.

Another kind of inquiry falls into the category of Gossip. Thus, Sam Donaldson to Sununu (everyone's juicy target): "Now, the talk around town is that you have not served the President well; and that, after the elections, you may be replaced. The popular name that comes to mind is eventually Sam Skinner." No question there, but what is a guest supposed to do, add to the "talk about town"? Fortunately for him, Sununu declined the invitation. Or consider Lesley Stahl, grilling Darman on October 7: "I want to ask you about this whole issue [a whole issue!] of you and Mr. Sununu being threatening to Congress and rude to Congress—stories about Mr. Sununu putting his feet up in the face of the chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Mr. Byrd, and insulting him . . ." Darman was composed enough to ask: "What's the question?" "The question is," replied the schoolmarm Stahl, "what about your behavior?" Darman: "I didn't see the incident you referred to: I didn't see Mr. Sununu put his feet up or act in the way that you described. And I don't have any way to comment on it." All this, on national television.

The Confessional and Gossip questions are evidence of Washington journalism's pronounced interest in who's up and who's down, who's in and who's out. These questions narrow the range of inquiry and help account for the tendency of Washington journalism to be petty and intellectually parochial, "tiring," if you will. Not surprisingly, questions that might broaden the inquiry are seldom, if ever, asked.

Here I have in mind questions that would go to issues of principle, that would probe an argument or unpack an idea. Thus, on the October 21 "Meet the Press," George Mitchell repeatedly sang the Democrats' song of "fairness," as in: "We feel that those who earn over $200,000 should pay a fair share of the deficit reduction burden." The question fairly begging to be asked concerned the principle of fairness guiding Mitchell, and why it should apply at the $200,000 level and not, say, at $100,000 or $500,000. For that matter, why not ask Mitchell: Is it really fair to tax people at different rates, and if so, why? That would have forced him to justify the progressive character of the income tax code, but on this Utley, Drew, and Russert were mute. Two weeks later, with Broder and Mitchell at Utley's elbow, "Meet the Press" had another opportunity to ask a Democrat to take the fairness point beyond its bumper-sticker dimension. But Richard Gephardt, who kept bringing up the matter of "tax fairness," wasn't asked even once to describe and defend his principles. Nor was he asked to do so during his earlier appearance on "This Week With David Brinkley."

The same point applies to discussions of the Civil Rights Act of 1990, which, after President Bush's veto on grounds that it would encourage racial quotas, became an issue in a number of House and Senate campaigns. All three shows ignored opportunities to ask guests for principled justifications of their positions. Those conservatives who opposed quotas could have been asked, "What makes a quota wrong?" Those liberals who said they opposed quotas (that being politically obligatory these days) could have been asked, "Which racial preferences do you endorse, and why?" And those who deplored Jesse Helms's ads against racial preferences in the North Carolina Senate race could have been asked, "What specifically is it about the ad that you object to?"

Inevitably, the political slant of the respective shows must be addressed. Primarily because of Will's presence, "This Week" retained a reasonably balanced shape, both in the questioning and the commentary. Will, for example, got Gephardt to admit that the increase in Social Security taxes promoted by Democrats in the early 1980s was "the biggest regressive change in the tax code" in that decade.

As for "Meet the Press," its offerings were not as balanced. One reason is the selection of journalists joining Utley. Only Novak is a political conservative (and of course he helped balance the one show he was on). This is not to say that liberal journalists cannot ask questions with conservative premises; in fact, Broder and Mitchell did ask a few. But it is more likely that a conservative journalist will pose questions from the right, and with conviction; such inquiries were all too few during the shows I reviewed. The ideological imbalance also was apparent during the brief commentary segment at the end of the show. For example, Elizabeth Drew, Tim Russert, and Garrick Utley's discussion of civil rights on October 21 left me feeling that I was eavesdropping on a conversation among Hill staffers in George Mitchell's office. (In fact, Russert worked for Hill Democrats before becoming NBC's Washington bureau chief.)

Another reason for the imbalance is Utley as moderator. Introducing that October 21 show, he mentioned two questions that apparently were to be asked of guest George Mitchell. The first, "Where do we stand now on raising taxes?" was thoroughly discussed; but the second, "Can Congress stand up to the special interest groups when it comes to cutting spending programs?" was pursued only once, and weakly, regarding cuts in Medicare. Contrary to the intro, this turned out to be a show about the tax half of fiscal policy—another preoccupation of Washington journalism.

Utley ends "Meet the Press" with a short commentary. Usually it is as banal as a detergent commercial. But sometimes Utley hoists an ideological flag. Thus, on October 28 he closed by offering "a little perspective on taxes themselves," telling viewers that taxes in the United States are a "bargain" compared to what they are in other countries, and that people in those other countries like their higher taxes because of what they get in return—health insurance, well-maintained roads and bridges, and other services. Drawing perhaps on his experience as a foreign correspondent, Utley expressed admiration for the fiscal policies of France, Germany, Holland, and Sweden. It's enough to make you wonder why he doesn't stay abroad permanently.

"Face the Nation," because it is Lesley Stahl's show, reflects her politics, which are liberal. This is not to say that she fails to ask some good questions (and indeed she did on the shows I watched). But Stahl's politics also came through: she's a believer in higher taxes and bigger government. Thus, on October 7, she asked Kevin Phillips how "Reaganomics" can possibly survive "in the body politic out there [her term for the wasteland outside the Beltway]." On the October 14 program, Ed Rollins, trying to focus on the need to cut spending, said, "Lesley, there is a $300 billion budget. You've got to be able to at least freeze it or cut something out of it." To which she replied: "But then you can't raise money for bridges and education and drug programs?"

The Sunday shows clearly could use new formats and new faces. The genius of a show like "Crossfire" is that cohosts Michael Kinsley and Pat Buchanan can be even more political in their questioning than Stahl or Utley. For neither Kinsley nor Buchanan has to worry about journalistic objectivity, as they openly work in the opinion side of the media. Because sharp political difference is built into the program by their very presence, the show tends to achieve political balance.

The weakness of "Crossfire" is that, like the Sunday shows, it usually can't take the time to work through an argu-

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ment or consider an idea. For this, you have to tune in "Firing Line," with William F. Buckley, Jr., which remains, after twenty years, the most intellectually satisfying of the talk shows.

On election night ABC was the hands-down winner for best—i.e., most intelligent—coverage. In addition to its political reporters, the network had on commentators Will, Barone, and Ben Wattenberg, and also Douglas Wilder, the Virginia governor. This mix provided far better analysis than that of CBS and NBC, both of which relied on their anchors and reporters. Alas for CBS, it was this format that enabled the network to deliver the most witless and indeed biased analysis of the night. "If there's anything that we heard out there at the polls today, it was the sound of Reaganomics crashing all around us," said an apparently hallucinating Ed Bradley. "If there's anything left of Reagan's trickle-down theory, Dan, it seems to be anxiety which seems to be trickling down through just about every segment of our society." If that's what voters told CBS, how come so many states turned out governors who'd raised taxes? Or why did the New Jersey congressional delegation oppose, en masse, the budget-deficit reduction package, which included some new taxes? Speaking of taxes, David Broder's willingness to contradict his colleague Jack Germond on NBC the morning after the elections is worth noting. Broder was absolutely right to insist against Germond that there had been strong anti-tax sentiment across the country.

Finally, the contest of 1990 was supposed to be the North Carolina Senate battle between Jesse Helms and Harvey Gantt. Predictably enough, mainstream journalism used lots of air time and column inches to explain how evil Jesse Helms was, and to deplore his ads opposing racial preferences. When Gantt lost by the kind of margin Helms's opponents usually lose by, the media's disappointment could not be contained. "This has really been a heart-breaking race," sobbed NBC's Andrea Mitchell on election night. "What happened here," she explained, "was a very strong racial message from Jesse Helms in the closing ten days of the race and it focused on something that we've found previously in Louisiana with the David Duke campaign." In other words, Helms made a racist appeal, and North Carolina obliged in racist fashion to elect him. The result in North Carolina was portrayed by national media as a sad measure of the nation's race relations.

But was it? The same news organizations that put so much work into the unsuccessful unmaking of Helms neglected to pay more than token attention to the election of Gary Franks to the House of Representatives, from Connecticut. Franks, who is thirty-seven, black, and conservative, is the first black Republican elected to the House in five decades—all facts worth chewing on. Another young black conservative Republican—Kenneth Blackwell—barely lost in his bid for the House from Ohio; he'll probably make another run for office. Like Helms, both Franks and Blackwell opposed the Civil Rights Act of 1990.

One need not agree with the way Helms portrayed the issue of racial preferences—he ran an ad showing white hands crumpling up a letter advising the recipient that he had lost out on a job that had gone to "a minority because of a racial quota"—in order to agree with his anti-quota position. Having worked as a journalist for six years in North Carolina, I am prepared to believe that there were a fair number of voters in the state who wished Helms hadn't pitted whites against minorities in his ad, yet agreed with the substance of his views. This is another way of saying what the media too often ignore—that voters sometimes have mixed views of those they support. □

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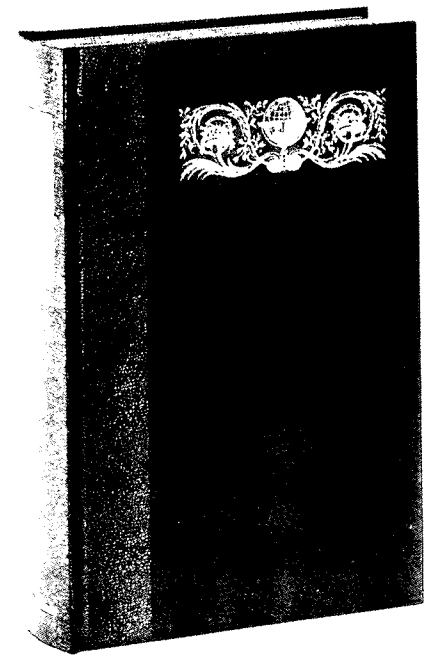

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THE GREAT AMERICAN SALOON SERIES

CAPITAL BEER AT THE UNION JACK

by Aram Bakshian, Jr.

As you might expect, Washington, D.C., where nearly everyone is either a primary or secondary parasite of the federal government, is not the ideal spot for really good watering holes. True enough, there are plenty of mediocre bars. The nation's capital has the highest per capita rate of alcohol consumption in the Republic and is pitted with singles bars, disco bars, power bars, jazz bars, sushi bars, gay bars, sports bars, biker bars, black bars, Latino bars, country western bars, piano bars, topless bars, and, lately, even *tapas* bars. But there are precious few saloons really worthy of the name, congenial spots an intelligent drinker can comfortably settle into.

The root problem may be Washington's chronic shortage of good drinkers. Don't get me wrong; the capital is awash in *drunks*, but they are an altogether different breed. D.C. drunks, while there are hybrids, fall (I use the verb advisedly) into five major categories:

(1) *The Hey-Look-At-Me's.* These pathetic chumps just want to feel important—which, for insurmountable reasons, they can't do while sobriety and reality reign. This class consists largely of junior congressional aides, yuppie lawyers, brokers, and flacks, journalists *manqués*, and visiting firemen out on a toot they wouldn't dare to contemplate back home in Cornbread County. Their common bond is their incurable obscurity. As John Prokoff, the master dispenser who presided over the old Members Bar at the National Press Club for nearly thirty years, used to say, their motto is, "Get drunk and be somebody."

(2) *The Whinos.* Boy, do they feel sorry for themselves, twenty-four hours a day! The only hitch is, they can't give full vent to their self-pity on the job, at home, or while sober, at least not as blatantly or brassily as when soaked. Most Whinos are either male wimps with good degrees and lousy jobs or resentfully woozy women in their middle thirties and beyond who (a) have a career but no children, (b) have children but no career, or (c) have both, but still rail at their fate.

(3) *The Ranting Rambos.* What they really want to do is punch someone in the nose, not drink, which is just their way of getting up the courage to uncork their pent-up aggression. Fortunately, they usually lack the guts and motor coordination to connect. Unless, that is, they come into chance collision with a Type 4 (see below).

(4) *The Punchbowl Punching Bags.* We all know at least one of these sad sacks, destined to go through life with a psychic "Kick Me" sign on their backs. Punching Bags don't ask much;

they just want to *be* punched in the nose. Unlike the Rambos, theirs is a more modest objective, easily attained at the hands of a larger, slightly less sozzled drunk, or a decent drinker whose wife/girlfriend/sister/daughter they have made a pathetic—and usually platonic—pass at.

(5) *The Garbage-In-Garbage-Outers.* Like an American Indian chug-a-lugging his first fifth of firewater, these quietly offensive characters come to a bar to guzzle until they fall asleep, vomit, or are ejected. On a really good day, they may manage a three-in-one. I vividly recall one Washington-based British correspondent of my acquaintance (let us call him "Willy Loathsome") who actually faded into a fitful slumber, lost his lunch, and was then hauled out of a bar and deposited on the pavement without ever regaining consciousness. Luckily, it happened in October, and Washington is famous for its gentle autumns.

Even the best-regulated of Washington drinking places will have its share of all of the above. The point is that they are bearable—rather like a tolerable bacteria count—when countered by a sufficient number of sound, congenial drinkers, presided over by able management in pleasant surroundings. Even in Washington, Samuel Johnson's maxim holds true—that there is "nothing which has yet been contrived by man by which so much happiness is produced as by a good tavern or inn."

You just have to know where, and when, to go. Time was when the Capital City could boast many such places. In the April 1974 issue of *The American Spectator*, in one of the first installments of this series, I described such a spot. Alas, the Members Bar of the National Press Club today is but a pale shadow of its former self, remodeled into what one indignant veteran describes as an "imitation Best Western cocktail lounge." The conversation can still be good and the bartenders are pros, but it just isn't the mecca of civilized saloonery that it used to be. A total rather than a partial loss is Marshalls, a rambling old wood-paneled saloon on upper Pennsylvania Avenue where writers, stagehands, jocks, airline stewardesses, politicos, and amiable riff-raff used to rub elbows in easy camaraderie. Marshalls closed its doors in the spring of 1990 through loss of lease rather than customers, and so far nothing has filled its special void.

For discerning beer drinkers, however, there *is* a light at the end of the funnel. At least one decent little pub has recently come onto the scene that provides full bar service and an outstanding selection of domestic and imported beers, including Young's, Harp, and Oxford—a tasty local dark brew—on tap at only $2.50 a pint. While the Union Jack does a brisk business with a loyal core clientele, it is not, thank God, on the tourist or trendy route.

Long may it remain so. Housed in the Canterbury, a small, well-run suite hotel on quiet N Street just one block east of Connecticut Avenue, the Union Jack is centrally but discreetly located. While the beams, rafters, and stucco may remind some of Stockbroker Tudor, an authentically lived-in (not to mention drunk-in) atmosphere prevails and the customer mix—at the bar, by the dartboard, or seated on just-sufficiently-threadbare imitation Sheraton chairs at small Regency roundtables—is about as good as it gets in Washington.

You never know who you'll bump into. More importantly, when you do, the surprise is usually a pleasant one. One evening, I fell into conversation with a rather attractive vegetarian cantoress (sic) from California's leading Reform synagogue who was in town for an animal rights rally but was otherwise quite nice and apparently sane. On a somewhat louder occasion I found myself seated with a jolly band of Glasgow and Ulster rugby enthusiasts celebrating a hometown win. They turned out to be excellent company once I gave them an accurate description of the Battle of the Boyne (with a particularly moving account of the death of Marshall Schomberg) and agreed to sing a verse of "The Sash My Father Wore." The encounter was all the more enjoyable since I was accompanied by "Gannon the Cannon," a dyed-in-the-wool Irish Catholic weighing nearly 300 pounds; not a single shot was fired in anger.

Indeed, "catholic" is the word for the Union Jack clientele: conservative think-tankers from the neighboring American Enterprise Institute often sitting cheek-by-jowl with their Brookings counterparts, Iranian émigrés (occasionally including a gentlemanly Persian who played a major role in the Iran-contra hearings), assorted politicos, and the nicer sort of out-of-town business and holiday visitors attracted to a quiet, smartly run suite hotel like the Canterbury rather than the mega-glitter caravanserais favored by vulgarians with fat expense accounts.

Aram Bakshian, Jr., a member of the National Council on the Humanities, writes and broadcasts on politics, history, and the arts.

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Depending on the time of the day, week, or year, you may meet politicians, graduate students, bike messengers, war-gamers, Morris dancers, Morgan collectors (the car, not the horse), or a gaggle of geography teachers in town for a convocation at the nearby National Geographic Society (one such group presented me with an inflatable globe after an impromptu geography quiz). Add to this a dollop of expatriate Brits, a smattering of Canadians and Australians from neighboring diplomatic missions, and a usually minimal measure of Type 1-5 Washington drunks, and you have the makings of as good a saloon evening as you're likely to find anywhere in the Nation's Capital. After serving lunch, the Union Jack reopens at 5:30, Monday through Saturday, and closes, at least in theory, at 11:00 p.m. Authentic—for some, all too much so—fish and chips are available until at least 9:00, and there is a first-rate restaurant, Chaucer's, downstairs in the hotel.

And when the screen doors of the Union Jack are finally drawn shut by Osman, the crack senior barman (an Afghan who would be practicing medicine today but for the late unpleasantness in his homeland, and who speaks much better English than most of his American customers), you can always toddle a few blocks northwestward for a slightly more upmarket nightcap at another of Washington's few great watering holes, the Fairfax Bar at the Ritz Carlton, of which more in a future number of this journal. □

THE TALKIES

EMPTY DREAMS

by James Bowman

When I taught English to small boys and compelled them to offer up creative prose compositions for my approval, I used to tell them that all essays ending with the words " . . . and then I woke up" or any formula approximating thereunto would be rewarded with instant failure. How I wish that Bruce Joel Rubin and Adrian Lyne had had the benefit of my tuition at a tender age! I don't claim to possess the pedagogical skill that would have been necessary to make them more literate, but at least I might have planted a doubt, a hesitation in their minds which, many years later, would have produced a full-blown sense of artistic prudence and restraint and spared the world their co-creation, *Jacob's Ladder.*

This picture has been a long time in the making ("Not long enough," I hear you add), and its origins in the 1970s show through the slick, nineties look of the finished product. It really belongs together with movies like *Three Days of the Condor* or *Capricorn One*, those left-wing paranoid fantasies that seemed to gush forth from some subterranean Hollywood pool, buried deep beneath the McCarthyite substrata, after Watergate. Poor old Richard Nixon, who was always the big bad wolf to the oppressed artistic red riding hoods of California, has a lot to answer for.

In *Jacob's Ladder*, the wicked military/CIA plot is to develop a hallucinogenic drug, with the help of a plea-bargaining hippie chemist, which renders men more aggressive. Because they are stupid as well as evil, the high-up military/CIA types do not foresee what will happen when the stuff is tried out on a particular battalion in Vietnam in 1971. The hippie chemist does, of course. "I tried to warn them," he says, through his anguished grimace. Someone always does. But they never listen, do they? They give the men the drug and the men go berserk and kill each other. Then the stupid and evil military/CIA types engage in a cover-up. Happens all the time.

What's original about this version of the standard story is that the paranoid dream-world is recognized as, in fact, a dream-world. The trouble is that the rest of the world is also a dream. Instead of "and then I woke up" at the end, it's "and then I didn't wake up," since it turns out that all that has happened in the film is the vision of hell and (only a little bit at the end) heaven of the hero *in articulo mortis*. We *thought* it was kind of weird. In the end the field medics pronounce him dead, and we discover that his whole post-Vietnam life was a dream, as in Ambrose Bierce's story, *Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge*. Oops! I've just given away the ending. Never mind. If you've read this far you won't be going to the film unless you're a masochist—in which case you will presumably be glad to have your pleasure in it spoiled anyway.

There is a certain consistency to Hollywood eschatology, which was developed during the Second World War years when popular demand for a comforting version of the afterlife was at its strongest. Taking their cue from *Topper* of 1937, films like *Here Comes Mr. Jordan* (its remake by Warren Beatty, *Heaven Can Wait*, stole its title from a much better Lubitsch film of 1943 on the same theme), *Down to Earth*, *A Guy Named Joe*, *Stairway to Heaven*, *Between Two Worlds*, and *Angel on My Shoulder* took us through a breezy tour of that "undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveler returns"—and returned us happy and comforted. As in traditional folklore, the ghosts generally had some unfinished business to take care of here below before they were beamed up to heaven and . . . whatever. Eating *pâté de foie gras* to the sound of trumpets, perhaps.

In the last couple of years we have had another spate of ghost pictures, most of them even more sappy than the originals. Last year there was what may still be, in spite of this year's stiff competition, the all-time schmalz champion, *Field of Dreams*, appropriately set in a cornfield, and a near competitor in Steven Spielberg's remake of *A Guy Named Joe* called *Always*, in which Audrey Hepburn played Richard Dreyfuss's heavenly guide. Oh dear, oh dear. Now, however, the ghost-world shows signs of becoming a bit more problematical—not only in *Jacob's Ladder* but also in *Flatliners*, where a bunch of medical students playing around with near-death experiences find that "we've brought our sins back; and they're pissed."

Well, it's a start. The trouble is that cutting mere sentimentality with simple moralism doesn't help very much. The basic outlines of the traditional ghost movie remain intact even in *Flatliners*, which teaches that bad people are in for a rough time in the hereafter. Once the sins are placated, however, the karmic tension dispersed and the lesson learned that "everything we do matters," the boys and girls are ready to behave themselves and go on living some unimaginably holy life—except that they've presumably got to do it in the landscape of nightmare grotesques (cf. *Batman*, *Dick Tracy*) that the movie makes of Chicago.

Alongside *Jacob's Ladder*, Bruce Joel Rubin gives us a more traditional version of the spook flick in what has turned out to be the biggest grossing movie of the year so far, *Ghost*. This plays on the heartstrings in exactly the same way as the WWII weepies and goes to show that you shouldn't tamper with a successful formula. Its slogan, "You will believe," is precisely wrong. It should be: "You will feel good about the death thing for a couple of hours." And why not? Belief is a much more difficult business, and sentimentalizing may be all that most of us have to tide us over the lack of it. Rubin even supplies some cute little demons to drag the souls of the baddies down to hell and render poetic justice *ex machina* (demon effects by Industrial Light and Magic).

What is most depressing about all this is that its sentimentality is all there is to it. Given the cinematic possibilities of such fantasies, it is a bit disappointing to learn that the mystery of death and transfiguration amounts to no more than ordinary people rendered invisible to the living. But then that is just business as usual in Hollywood. We are flattered to learn that dead people, like gangsters, cowboys, policemen—fill in the blank—are just like us. So if you think the Righteous Brothers singing "Unchained Melody" is beautiful music and tend to fall asleep during *Macbeth*, you'll love *Ghost*. →

James Bowman is The American Spectator*'s movie critic.*

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I myself tend to fall asleep in dream movies, which is what I did in the legendary Akira Kurosawa's *Dreams*. If I could remember my own dreams on that occasion, I might be tempted to tell them to you, but I have always been blessed with instant forgetfulness when it comes to dreams. The only good thing to be said about Kurosawa's is that they are visually stunning. The visual imagination in this series of cinematic haiku is almost enough to keep you awake in spite of its lack of narrative or dramatic content and its facile, greenish political message. The foxes' wedding procession, the dance of the dolls in the peach orchard, the coming to life of van Gogh's *Langlois Bridge* and *Wheatfield With Crows*, and the Dantesque Weeping Demons are especially memorable. There may be other dreams that I slept through.

Even Kurosawa seems to jump on the ghost bandwagon at one point, where he includes a segment in which a platoon of dead soldiers marches out of a tunnel to confront the commander who sent them to their deaths. "You're really dead," he tells them, even though they don't seem so sure. "Returning to the world like this proves nothing. Please go back and rest in peace." So they do. Would that the ghosts of our Western dream-mongers and metaphysicians were so sensible and obedient. With them, on the contrary, spectral existence always proves something. They wouldn't bother with it otherwise. And it is mildly surprising to me that what it always seems to prove is a kind of Sunday-school morality—this from the angry young men of Babylon on the Pacific.

There are other kinds of cinematic dreams that disappoint by their mundanity, too. You don't want people so real that they bore you to tears. This, at any rate, was how I felt in Barry Levinson's *Avalon*. The movies as family snapshot album are tolerable only to the extent that we are given some compelling reason to care about the family. But this film has no point to it: it is all chronicle and no theme—unless you consider the idea that America is a great place for East European immigrants a theme. We are made to feel mildly glad and sad about their ups and downs over the years, but we leave wondering why the time wouldn't have been better spent looking into our own family histories.

Their closeness to reality also damages *Reversal of Fortune* and *Memphis Belle*. If you know the Claus von Bülow story you won't learn anything new about it from the filmic version, though it is amusing to watch Jeremy Irons impersonate him. The difference between documentary and fiction is that the latter requires some real insight into character, and for that we would have to know if, and how, Claus is guilty. Barbet Schroeder's natural coyness on this subject renders his film a "Saturday Night With Connie Chung"-style dramatization. Likewise, *Memphis Belle* is a remake of a World War II documentary about a B-17 crew—but its value as documentary is seriously diminished by the admixture of schlock drama.

Routine pictures like these raise a doubt as to what has happened to Hollywood as dream-factory. The special character of the immigrant hope in *Avalon*, for example, is lost. The fact that these people are immigrants is accidental. What they get up to here is what might happen to any American family. So what? Dreams seem to be reserved for the nightmarish visions of *Jacob's Ladder* except where they are mere wish-fulfillment, as in *Ghost* or, in a very different way, *White Palace*.

Here I imagine a big movie-going audience of middle-aged divorced women, most of them less slatternly if also less attractive than Susan Sarandon's character, munching their popcorn and thrilling to the promise of happiness and a new life in the arms of frightfully attractive and rich younger men. The invocation of Marilyn Monroe, the caricature of Jewish family life, and the uplift provided by Miss Sarandon's fortune-telling sister I could have done without, but I can live with all that for the sake of watching Hollywood do what Hollywood does best.

And it is nice to know that it can also look at that kind of dream in a detached and ironic way, as it does in *Tune in Tomorrow*, a delightful romp through fifties nostalgia (again!) but also through the great, "dream-factory" days of popular culture. Peter Falk as Pedro Carmichael, the radio soap-opera scriptwriter with an irrational hatred of Albanians, is a joy to watch, and Keanu Reeves and Barbara Hershey do a fine job as the couple whose lives he manipulates for the sake of his art. Here the younger man/older woman theme is more romantic than it is in *White Palace* even though it is being simultaneously parodied in the soap opera, which is played as a film within the film.

This raises the issue of the relationship between art and reality which is cogently addressed when Reeves accuses Falk of stealing his words to Miss Hershey as material for the radio drama. Falk replies: "And where did you get *your* words? From us; from writers. You feed on us, we feed on you." This is absolutely right and fits together beautifully with the romance, which can only flower when the hard-bitten older woman abandons her attempt to be tough and "realistic" about it. The borderline between reality and even a fairy-tale art is never so clearly fixed as we imagine it.

This insight could have been made more of, however, and I think that the film strikes a slightly false note at the end. Falk's valedictory to the two lovers is the aphorism that "Life is a s--tstorm, and, when it's raining s--t, there's no better umbrella than art." That view of art as mere prophylactic is what we might expect from a shamanistic writer of soap-operas, but it detracts from—to some extent even contradicts—the more profound and universal statement about art that the film edges close to earlier on. For the dream-merchants of Hollywood, however, I can well believe that it is all ye know on earth and all ye need to know. ❐

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BEYOND THE BOOM: NEW VOICES ON AMERICAN LIFE, CULTURE, AND POLITICS

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George Gilder

Why has Tom Wolfe given up? Once the most bloodcurdling scourge of America's cultural intelligentsia, he has abandoned the O'Hare faculty club to scramble up the slopes of Mount Parnassus, jousting for immortality with such as Tolstoy and Balzac, Hugo and Dickens, and leaving us behind to joust for small change with such as Andrea Dworkin, E. L. Doctorow, and the *New Yorker*'s breath poets. Meanwhile, Wolfe is bequeathing his advantage miles to a group of uppity New York journalists and *arrivistes* who call themselves the Vile Body and who meet monthly in Lewis Lehrman's Manhattan mansion.

I can understand Wolfe's inclination to leave cultural matters behind. The art scene has gotten much tougher since the palmy days when he provoked an uproar by exposing the incredible scandal of the Painted Word. For example, some of the more high-minded among the Vile Body were recently pondering the question: Under what circumstances can you legally spend government funds for the public display of a crucifix? It's not the kind of problem that has much occupied Wolfe over the years. But defenders of the separation of church and state were shocked to learn of a simple new way to breach the wall without even bribing any public officials: you merely submerge the crucifix in urine. By this device, as critics of Andres Serrano's famous urinary "sculpture" were to discover, any effective opposition to crucifix subsidies will vanish; opponents will be denounced as blasphemers in the temple of Art. Otherwise it turns out you may also use government money for the crucifix if it is employed for simulated masturbation by a "performance artist" in the nude, or if it is made to protrude elegantly from the sinuous rear of a distinguished pornographer.

The sad fact is that the new Parnassian Tom Wolfe is far too tame to deal with this kind of thing. Reality has run well beyond his satirical reach. For government-strength high art, you need a Bob Tyrrell or a P. J. O'Rourke. But if the fiasco in American culture has finally reached a point so grotesque that even the author of *Radical Chic* has had to throw up his hands in feckless despair, what can we expect from his followers in the Vile Body?

George Gilder is the author of Wealth and Poverty, Men and Marriage, *and* Microcosm.

Well . . . many pleasant surprises.

First, as in Evelyn Waugh's original, we get a movie. Written, directed, and produced by Vile founder Whit Stillman, mostly filmed in Lehrman House, and peopled by Vile extras galore, *Metropolitan* was so good, true, funny, and beautiful that it lured paying customers in numbers well beyond even the multitudes in Stillman's close family, who put up some $500,000 to get Whit out of their hair. Entirely a story of New York, *Metropolitan* became a national hit without even attracting the barest notice in the *New Yorker*, which was occupied in reviewing important artistic works such as *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer* and *Die Hard 2*.

Then the Vile Body gave us a new magazine, *NY*. Do we really need a new magazine? We already have *The American Spectator*, full of Vile writers, and the *Dartmouth Review*, edited by the precocious Kevin Pritchett, a black student who joined the Vile Body while writing editorials for the *Wall Street Journal*.

Since the vicious Hitler quote was infiltrated into his paper, Pritchett's experience has raised an interesting question, akin to the crucifix issue: Under what circumstances will the president of an Ivy League college take space on the *New York Times* op-ed page to assail one of his students, a young black writer, as a fascist and anti-Semite, after attempting to rouse a campus lynch mob against him with a speech worthy of Lester Maddox?

The answer is clear. If the young black writer generally supports Israel, bravely renounces the racialist and anti-Semitic whining of his black classmates, and runs the best, most influential, and doggedly anti-racist student publication in America, he'll be called "fascist scum." Pritchett commits the unforgivable gaffe of refusing to be guided into his proper place in the ranks of the victim classes, somewhere between the lesbian homeless and the Nicaraguan *enragés*. So he will be given no quarter. There will issue a heroic commotion of tigerish growls and snarls from the same Ivy League presidential kittens who roll over and play dead whenever a radical gang seizes their offices to extort money, say, for an Arafat annex to the Tawana Brawley Center for the Performing Arts.

As it turns out, however, we *do* need the new Vile magazine. *NY* is a scholarly and trenchant journal also produced in Lehrman House by Vile editors and writers backed by the Manhattan Institute. The first issue contains extraordinary essays by William Tucker on Manhattan's housing madness (more than half of all the public housing in the country is in New York) and by John Chubb and Terry Moe on educational madness (according to Albert Shanker, New York City has more educational bureaucrats than the entire continent of Europe). Originating at the Brookings Institution, the Chubb-Moe piece demonstrates that there is no connection whatever between educational spending and student performance, rather a clear inverse relationship—adjusted for family income and education—between school performance and number of administrators. The magazine ends with a poignant, beautifully written article by Maggie Gallagher on the rise and decline of Park Slope, Brooklyn. Gallagher, Tucker, and Richard Vigilante, the editor, are all in the Vile Body, as is William Hammett, the publisher, who leads the Manhattan Institute.

Now with a big push by Tom Wolfe, who contributed an introduction, the Vile Body has produced a book. Edited by Terry Teachout and titled *Beyond the Boom: New Voices on American Life, Culture and Politics*, it expounds the theory that Tom and I, among other "middle-aged conservatives" . . . "belong to the past." There

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is also the clear implication that despite all his labors on the slopes of Parnassus, even Tom will not live forever and these kids of the Baby Boom are going to take over one of these days. Why Tom encourages this kind of impertinence I have no idea. But I am still far behind him on the slopes and in no position to put up with it.

Take this Teachout guy, for example. I have been following his career, waiting for him to stumble, ever since, writing in *Commentary* well before the Serrano breakthrough, he tested the urine treatment on one of my own books. He got away with that (I didn't even get any government money), and now there's no stopping him. He's off to write a major biography of Mencken, while producing regular editorials in the *Daily News* and apparently weekly articles for any other Vile publication in reach. With *Beyond the Boom*, he fulfills the incredible dream of getting his name on the cover of a book above Tom Wolfe's!

There are a number of superb essays in the book, including Richard Vigilante's trenchant defense of the yuppies and Maggie Gallagher's essay on "house lust." Although the numbers do not support their claim that this generation as a whole faces an acute economic or housing problem, they offer much evidence of the dire social predicament of middle-class families in New York. Not only are all the schools and housing programs run by the most inept and malignant socialist bureaucracies this side of the Gulag, but the streets and subways are beset by criminals and thugs.

What the Vile Body calls a housing crisis is actually a crime-and-schooling crisis. There is ample cheap housing in New York; the problem is that it's in communities dominated by criminals. To avoid being mugged, people will readily accept a standard of living at least fifty percent lower than they could obtain by resorting to the ample cheap housing within high-crime zones. The intact families all necessarily throng to the few communities where their children might be safe. For this obvious choice, they are called racists by liberals in City Hall, who chase them down and hound them out of the city by putting homelessness centers and drug clinics in their arduously reclaimed neighborhoods.

But Vigilante and Gallagher are wrong to imply that earlier generations of intellectuals earned as much money or had access to housing remotely as good as today's. When Gallagher talks about the Boomers living worse than their parents, she is comparing writers and artists with professionals. Like many of us, her friends made the fateful choice of avoiding the graduate studies and hard unselfish work that their parents performed in business and the professions. Instead they can enjoy the mental luxuries and expressive freedoms of the intellectual life. Because the intellectual life usually gives no economic cushion, however, many regret this choice, which is fostered by parents who swoon over every poem or drawing offered by their precious children without telling them that the arts are mostly an avocation, not a means of support.

In all societies, choosing an intellectual career means a real risk of poverty. That's why so many people cripple their minds in law school. That's why so much of the work of intellectuals consists of special gripes and class grievances of little interest or worth to the rest of the society.

Most of the essays, however, avoid such economic and political issues in favor of meditations on culture. Susan Vigilante provides a splendid discussion of the twelve-step movement of Alcoholics Anonymous, with its spiritual thrust, and in the process explains "why so many Boomers are jerks." David Brooks gives a piquant portrait of one of them, a Washington "policy wonk." Bruce Bawer and John Podhoretz offer two penetrating views of the problems of current film. Roger Kimball presents a stirring critique of the collapse of intellectual rigor and seriousness in the arts and offers a nostalgic revel from an earlier day when titans such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Lionel Trilling walked the pages of the *Hudson Review*.

But like Allan Bloom's offering of Straussian political theory as a means of redemption, Kimball's notions of critical rigor and "seriousness" provide no source for the cultural revitalization that he seeks. The socialism and secularism of that earlier generation which he cherishes paved the way for the current decline. Like many of the writers in this volume, and like Teachout himself, Kimball is pursuing order and tradition—the values of a civilized society—without any recognition that those values cannot be summoned in themselves but must be passed on to new generations of children, chiefly through religious teaching and worship.

Walter Olson mars an otherwise astute piece by making an implicit claim to the contrary: that each generation can recover civilization by the unaided use of reason. But reason is impotent to inculcate moral values, to induce girls to say no in the heat of sexual excitement, to foster the commitments and sacrifices of child-rearing, and to propagate the disciplines and long-time horizons of a civilized and productive society. It takes religion to convey such goals to new generations.

Donna Rifkind suggests writing itself as a kind of religious calling. But writing is not religion; at its best it serves the religious sensibility by touching on the divine world, on Gerard Manley Hopkins's "dearest freshness deep down things." All else is finally stale and futile. To the extent that the Vile Body wants secular humanism without social chaos, it is part of the problem rather than the solution.

Only the Vigilantes, George Sim Johnston, and Lisa Schiffren point beyond the shallow concerns of most of these essays. Schiffren's contrarian

(continued on page 40)

BOOM BABIES

I love children—especially when they cry, for then someone takes them away.
—Nancy Mitford

So you're going to have a baby. How lovely for you. While this decision will reveal itself naturally over time, it is customary to share the happy news with family and friends. Please resist a natural impulse to divulge the minutiae of conception. I don't care if you tried ten times a day; now you've hit the bull's eye so just keep quiet. By all means forgo passing the sonogram around the dinner table, please. And remember, Lamaze is of interest largely to its participants. Only a select coterie will relish the opportunity to see the videotape your husband made in the delivery room.

A name is something you inflict for life on your unsuspecting offspring. When thinking about names, be advised that no one has ever thought children named Robert or Elizabeth were anything less than special. Saratoga and Devon, while interesting options for a new bottled water, are probably less than suitable as choices for your daughter. Stealing other people's family names is beyond the pale.

Well, the baby has arrived. The tyke now needs constant attention until he is toilet-trained. This, I'm afraid, means diapers. Some places are not so fabulous for changing your baby. French restaurants, for instance. Or in the empty train seat across the aisle. I mention this solely for the sake of the child, who must be mortified, and would certainly retreat to a private place if he could walk. While an impulse to conceal evidence is well intentioned, stuffing tidy bundles under your host's bed is considered bad form.

I know it's tough, but you can't let the baby run the show. It is unreasonable, therefore, to expect that putting your child in the center of the room will provide enough conversational ballast for a group of adults for more than a few minutes. Believe it or not, yours is not the first generation to experience the wonders of parenthood, and discussions about new jogger-stroller designs and Baby's funniest expressions of the day should be limited to twenty-five minutes. I feel this is a generous allotment.

Your baby is not some kind of a joke. Please suppress your famous wry sense of camp when dressing the child. No sunglasses of any kind. Those little Elvis and Carmen Miranda outfits aren't fooling anyone. Tip: there is probably a reason why Lycra bicycle shorts and dinner jackets are so tough to find in infant sizes.

Because the babysitter is now going the way of the dodo, and because working parents are (mistakenly) racked with guilt about not spending that extra hour or two with their child, they routinely bring it along into territories previously uncharted by the young. This is most unpleasant for all concerned. Taking your baby into a public place necessitates your exercising *vigorous* control over his behavior. "There are no rules for manners in the street and in public for very little children," wrote Emily Post in *Children Are People* (1940), "because they are always in the care of someone who is expected to look after their behavior." That Mrs. Post does not even address the subject of manners for the extremely young is no oversight. For your child is your little ambassador to the world, an emblem of your own good manners, or lack thereof.

By all means bring the baby to show everyone at the office. Once. If you are rich, be advised that it is in questionable taste to arrive with your uniformed housekeeper in tow, particularly if the child can walk. Children at lunchtime should not be at the Four Seasons having spa cuisine; they should be home having a peanut-butter sandwich. If you are compelled to bring your little daughter to the matinee of *I Vitelloni*, keep in mind that answering her incessant questions about what the subtitles say, in baby talk, does not make either of you prized patrons. Remember that Jack Daniel's and apple juice is an excellent pick-me-up for children on those flights from Miami to Lima. And by all means, no screaming babies in church. You would be shocked to know your neighbors' unanswered prayers.

—William Irvine

(Mr. Irvine is a writer living in New York City.)

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BOOM COMPANIONS

Men, H.L. Mencken once wrote, have a better time of it than women; for one thing, they marry later; for another, they die earlier. We are reminded every day just how much better a time of it we have. Feminism, while it may have given new options to women in regard to their careers, and earning money, and whether or not to have children, has also fired up their unrelenting, overarticulate self-fixation. As the redoubtable Mona Charen has written, "It's not just blinding careerism on the part of women that has so aggravated relationships between the sexes. It's the incessant carping that accompanies it." And the stridency has reached a level reminiscent of the days of the Women's Christian Temperance Union's assault on the saloon. How else to explain such things as women comics, or the recent issue of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* magazine that featured an article on "Why All Men Are Jerks" and yet another attack on cheerleading as dehumanizing.

The upscale newly married menfolk I know no longer expect to come home to dinner on the table—or anything else, for that matter. They come home and vacuum the house, clean the bathroom, do the laundry, go shopping, stop by the dry cleaner, and wash the floors, in addition to the fourteen-hour stint they put in at the office.

And still the carping that drove Rip Van Winkle underground continues. But the formerly swaggering young bucks of today do as men always have done, as they were taught by their fathers: they keep their heads down and *suck it up.* When you're hit by a line drive in the lip, you don't rub.

But let's cut right to the chase. Like many Americans, I work in an office with a computer system on which one can write messages to colleagues both in the office and in outlying bureaus. Someday our novelists will discover the profound impact that that system has had on social intercourse; among other things, one can conduct informal surveys on it.

So one day, after the paper had been put to bed, I sent the following list to a few male reporters between the ages of twenty-four and thirty-three, all married less than three years and without children. No commentary, just The List, which I entitled simply *The Horror.*

1. My life is miserable.
2. I have no money.
3. You're never here.
4. I don't like this a. apartment, b. house.
5. My boss is insane.
6. I hate my job.
7. You don't take me seriously.
8. You don't take my career seriously.
9. I have to lose weight.
10. You never do what I want to do.

The result: An outpouring, a cathartic gush, as to a man they pounded the keyboards with their collected wisdom, wisdom gained painfully and over the course of the first hard months of married life with their little muffins. Within ten minutes, my list had grown to 100 items; it could have grown to 1,000, although there was some repetition.

The responses fell neatly into a few categories, ranging from the generic "Woe is me"—what possible response is there to the Ibsenesque *My life is miserable* or *It's my mother's fault?*—to "Failure to Communicate," "My Career," and "Sex"—*We had sex last season,* for example, and the dark *Well, I'm not one of your old girlfriends.*

Consider, under social obligations, "Friends." The responses ranged from *You hate my friends,* to which one of the subjects appended *(True),* to *All my friends are insane, All my friends are stupid, Stop making fun of my friends,* and the all-inclusive *I have no friends.*

Or consider "My Career." We all, apparently, do not take our wives' careers seriously. At the same time, *I hate my job* and *I want another career* placed high on the list of complaints, along with the slight envy of *All you think about is your job.* And has anyone, anywhere, ever heard of a woman's boss who was not "insane"?

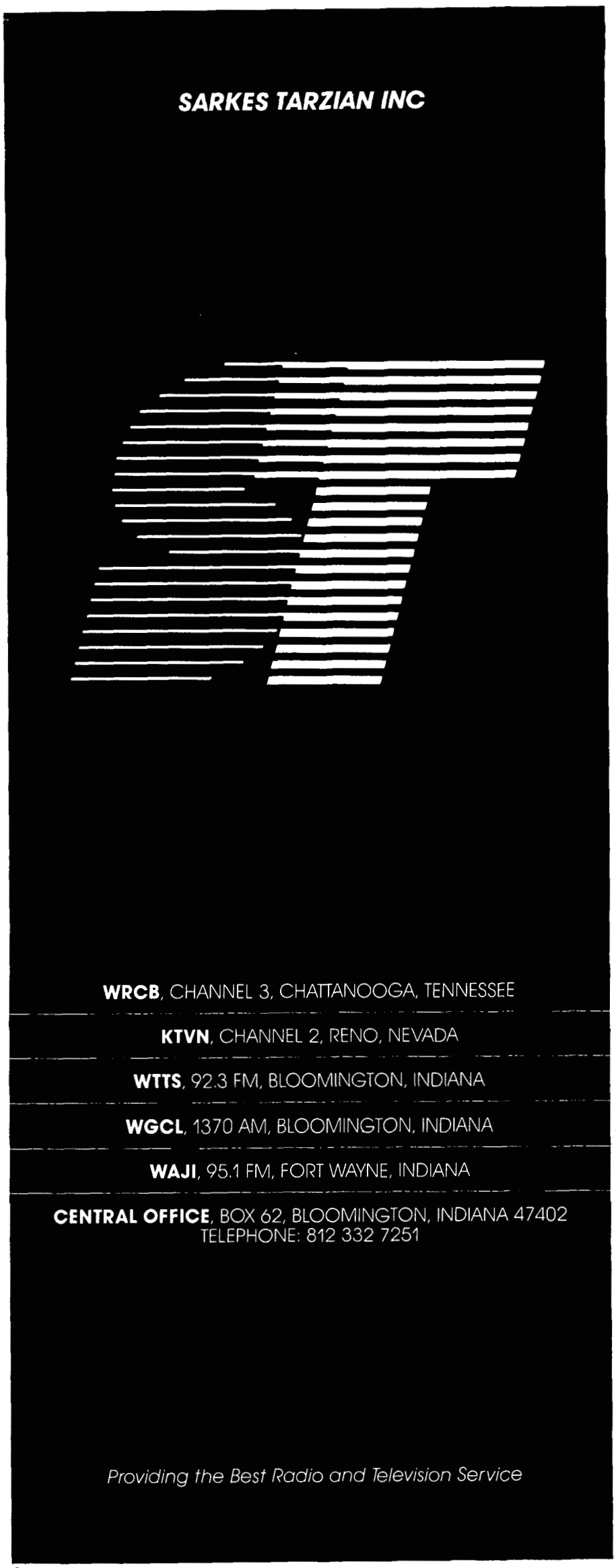
Then there was the old chestnut, "Communication." Complaints ran from *We don't talk* and *You never listen to me* to *You don't take me seriously* and, for the completely browbeaten, *You never say anything* and *You never say how you really feel.* Perhaps the best, however, was the response to the fellow who managed to call home around 11 p.m., after a hard night in a nearby saloon: *Where are YOU?*

Of course there are plenty of bad habits to beef about. We all either sleep, work, drink, or weigh too much; and some of us care about our cars more than our wives. We never do what they want to do, and *You always . . .*

As in all surveys of this sort, there was a "Miscellaneous" category, and it predictably carried the more unusual comments. How about the slightly kinky *You leave your beer bottles in bed*? And *Why are you always breaking things?* whose corollary was *We don't have any dishware anymore.* Or, *I do* not *talk on the telephone for 30 percent of my life.*

—Joe Mysak

(Mr. Mysak, TAS*'s chief saloon correspondent, is managing editor of the daily* Bond Buyer.*)*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discussion of the contrasting roles of war and rhetoric is the most original work in the book. Returning from a year in Afghanistan, Schiffren contrasts the realism and maturity of the war-hardened mujahedeen with the slick and shallow rhetoric of her American intellectual contemporaries. Johnston offers a smooth critique of the Boomers' ambivalence about religion.

Of course, an uneasiness with religion is also the problem of Tom Wolfe, the Vile Body's patriarch and Pied Piper. In his masterpiece, *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*, Wolfe showed a clear comprehension of the critical role of religion in life and art. If he wants to achieve the pinnacles of a Tolstoy or Hugo, whose central theme was always the divine presence in the world, Wolfe will have to transcend the negative brilliance of his current art. He will have to come to a recognition that, beyond all his scintillating vanities, there is more to life than status-seeking.

Beyond the Boom is a worthy book that evokes vividly the concerns and aspirations of this generation of conservative intellectuals. But nearly all these writers shrink back from the threshold of real commitment and depth. To fulfill their great potential, they must regain some of the passion and fire of youth. The most profound moment in these essays is George Sim Johnston's reference to *The Magic Mountain*:

> In the pivotal chapter, the bourgeois hero dreams of an Arcadian landscape . . . where "reasoned goodness conditions every act." Soon he is drawn to a solemn temple which somehow seems at the heart of the matter. [In the sanctuary,] he finds two gray old women "with hanging breasts and dugs of finger-length" dismembering a small child.

Many of the writers in *Beyond the Boom* worship at the temple of reason and have yet to make the sad but inevitable discovery that it is an empty sanctum and bears an incense of toxic fumes. As Andrew Ferguson shows, when a society commits itself to radical skepticism, it reaches not the cool passes of rationality but an almost fathomless gullibility. Perhaps the most telling sign of the failure of the Boomers' mostly secular rationalist culture is a society that today is reaching a level of belief in mumbo-jumbo unprecedented since the Dark Ages. In the opening essays, Richard Brookhiser and Wally Olson take great solace in polling data. What do they make of the finding that some 55 percent of the American people now believe in astrology, up from a third just twenty years ago? As Chesterton wrote, when people stop believing in God, they will not believe in nothing; they will believe in anything. □

SUDDENLY: THE AMERICAN IDEA ABROAD AND AT HOME, 1986-1990

George Will/The Free Press/417 pp. $19.95

Matthew Scully

George Will's finest moment as a columnist came April 22, 1982, when he filed one of the most compelling essays ever about the abortion culture, "The Short Life and Long Dying of Infant Doe." As he examined the logic which led doctors in Bloomington, Indiana, to starve to death an infant with Down's syndrome, Will's best traits were evident—relentless rationality, a disdain of euphemism, a ferocious hatred of evil just barely restrained by civility. His own son, Will wrote at the end, had Down's syndrome and was "doing nicely, thank you." "He can do without people like Infant Doe's parents, and courts like Indiana's asserting by their actions that people like him are less than fully human. On the evidence, Down's syndrome citizens have little to learn about being human from the people responsible for the death of Infant Doe."

In fact, the best thing about that "Infant Doe" column was that it so thoroughly disregarded Will's own notion of political writing "as a public act." Commentary is necessarily public, but somehow the really persuasive columnists don't make it seem so. They write unselfconsciously, caring damn little how their piece will look as "a public act."

In *Suddenly*, a collection of columns going back to 1986, the old George Will is still there, only less often than we might have hoped. Simple, unequivocal, and unaffected columns like "Infant Doe" come too rarely. More and more his essays have the air of "public acts," intended to elevate, instruct, scold, reward, or otherwise direct the "soulcraft" in which politicians and political writers like himself are supposedly engaged.

The tone is tutorial from the very first two words of the introduction, informing us how "proper conservatives" think and act. Later on, we're favored with discourses on "political philosophy, properly undertaken," "conservatism, properly understood," and "vocations, properly pursued." About each, Will does indeed have something worth saying. If only he could say it more agreeably, without that implacable indignation that gives even the best argued of his columns a tension and bitterness. Less in the spirit of conservatism than liberalism, properly understood, he has a way of turning every issue (even something as innocent as America's shortage of nurses) into a broad indictment.

Milton Friedman comes in for some particularly nasty treatment. Professor Friedman, it seems, has a bad case of "taxophobia," Will's sophisticated term, and also favors decriminalizing drugs on libertarian grounds. "What rubbish," Will sniffs. "Friedman is caught. . . . [His] monomaniacal worship of 'free choice'—even regarding addictive substances—is less a philosophy than a fetish. It demonstrates the intellectual poverty of libertarianism, the antipolitical and antisocial doctrine of severe individualism."

There are reasonable enough grounds for doubting Friedman's analysis of the drug problem. But is it fair to brush him off as a purveyor of rubbish, an "antisocial" misfit "caught" trying to pull one over on us? Friedman may not possess Will's mastery of "governance"—though the various countries which seek his economic counsel seem to have done all right by him—but isn't even he entitled to that "civility" and "propriety" so vital to "soulcraft"?

Even more tiresome than Mr. Will's charges of "taxophobia" are the three or four columns in which he refers to "the nation's thick wallet," this to support his thesis that we're "a nation undertaxed." "The nation's wallet is remarkably thick. The government's wallet is thin by political choice. . . . Bush's taxophobia guarantees that the deficit will stifle rational debate about choices for the public household." Indeed, Will writes, the President was not only "monomaniacal" in opposing taxes; he's a "lapdog" so "hollowed at the center" as to be unfit for governance.

It doesn't occur to Will that when he finds himself eyeing other peoples' wallets, speculating on how much more can be extracted, he has strayed just a bit from the elevated pursuit of soulcraft. The household is in arrears precisely because his "ethic of common provision"—another favorite loftyism—amounts in real life to common congressional troughsmanship, that subtle art of dolecraft by which billions are redistributed in exchange for votes.

Leaving aside Will's own peculiar manias, one can't quite account for that contemptuous tone in which he invariably addresses the head of our common household. Maybe it's just a case of wounded pride, Will having lost the presidential favor he relished in the Reagan years. This would explain the continued hectoring even now that Bush has shaken off his taxophobia. Whatever the cause, all that anger has not been good for Will's writing. "I write (of course) the old-fashioned way, in longhand, with a fountain pen," he confided in his 1983 *Statecraft as Soulcraft*, in the "firm conviction that the rushing typewriter, with its clackety-clack rhythm, is an enemy of well-crafted sentences." But as every writer knows, the well-crafted sentence has a still more determined enemy—vanity. Like the college editor who first discovers the satisfaction of being feared or admired for his words, Will strains just a bit too hard for the scathing put-down or high-minded denunciation.

Bush, he writes in the lead paragraph of his first-year assessment, "showed little promise and he has kept his promise"—a weak variation on the Churchill line about Attlee being modest, and having much to be modest about. The President "is reeling around the ring, groggy from a devastating flurry of hooks to his solar plexus and uppercuts to his chin, punches thrown by himself." To say anything good about Bush is "a Herculean task." His "low, dishonest campaign . . . squandered the precious commodity of the nation's attention." Bush's vice-presidential nominee "was so over-programmed that it seemed someone backstage, armed with a remote-control wand, was operating a compact disc—a very compact disc—in Quayle's skull . . ." (By contrast, Will writes in an equally strained attempt at praise, Democratic voters who turned down Senator Lloyd Bentsen in 1976 "should have been spanked and sent to their rooms without dinner.") Perhaps in some academic journal these finely crafted barbs would pass for howlers, but just how they could cause the least distress to the President of the United States is hard to figure. Intimidation, it's fair to say, is not the strong suit of either man.

It is depressing enough to find a thinker of Will's caliber emulating the rhetorical power plays of the left—regarding opponents as cranks laboring under one or another "phobia." Sadder still, he's seldom to be found de-

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fending fellow conservatives in need of help—Robert Bork being the outstanding exception. About the NEA, for instance, he makes the usual conservative points, but only after dismissing as "foolish" a proposal by Senator Jesse Helms to act on them. Dan Quayle too, in those weeks before the election when friends were most scarce, found himself an object of Will's ridicule—he'd "absorbed" his conservatism "in a golf cart."

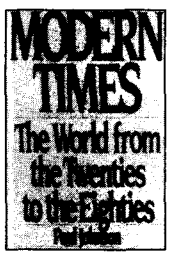
Obviously, a conservative journalist needn't always take the side of Republicans, even if he himself owes much to Republican patronage. But he can at least refrain from adding to the abuse of a wounded or maligned compatriot, and hold off on the uplifting lectures on governance, the ideal polity, or conservatism properly understood. Conservatism, whether absorbed in a golf cart or lecture hall or network studio, puts a lot of stock in loyalty, and for all his "inelegant" ways at least Quayle's idea of soulcraft includes this trait. So readily does Will embrace media caricatures of conservative "extremists" that you wonder if even his empathy for Judge Bork was that of a fellow conservative, or of a fellow intellectual.

This suspicion only deepens as one reads his 1986 column, "Mario Cuomo's Sparring Spirit," the weakest of the lot and the moral inverse of Will's "Infant Doe." Cuomo too is a big one for governance and the polity and statecraft, and we all know the compassionate results. Mario Cuomo, properly understood, is a clever but self-impressed sophist of whom the Will of old would have made light work. Alas, the column's "New York" dateline alone tells us what to expect. Our influential scribe has ventured off to spend a day with the powerful governor, returning full of fresh impressions and reassessments.

If any of the grave questions that used to concern Will ever came up, they didn't rate a mention. We learn only that Cuomo is a stimulating companion, keeps a demanding schedule, has a "willowy but steely lady" as a driver, put in a "graceful performance" in a radio interview, and quizzed a six-year-old boy with "metaphysical" questions until the child—no match for the governor's sparring spirit—"burst into tears." (My, *that* was a graceful performance.)

Efforts to "catch" his subjects in fraudulent reasoning are apparently reserved for crackpots like Professor Friedman, for he makes no mention at all of abortion even after having spent the day with its most eloquent defender. Will can only admire that sparring spirit and wonder idly whether the nation may one day experience—"and perhaps even enjoy"—the "metaphysical overload" a Cuomo Administration would induce. Go back to his previous collections and you find columns with titles like "Abortion and Fetal Pain," "A Trip Toward Death," and "Abortion: The Court's Intellectual Scandal." Nowadays, he writes essays like "Abortion: There Are Splittable Differences," acknowledging "a broad consensus supporting liberal abortion policies"—doubtful points the old George Will would have dismissed as morally irrelevant.

Whether or not America is undertaxed, the same, alas, cannot be said of Will's readers, and after a while you find yourself skimming over the homilies. Turn to the end, though, and there's a more familiar and agreeable George Will, forgetting the "public act" and writing again about his son, those hopeless Cubs, the family dog. Life as "America's most influential commentator," as the dust jacket calls him, composing a thrice-weekly chore list for the "public household," no doubt wears on a man, perhaps especially a man of such gifts. Like so many who would run the public household, he just needs to stay closer to his own. □



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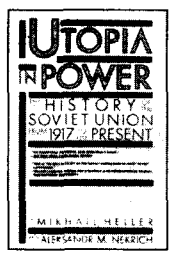

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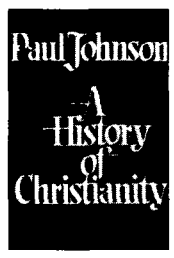

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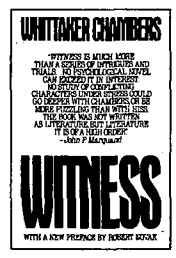

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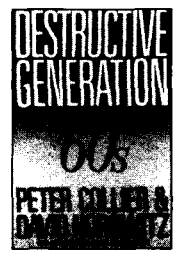

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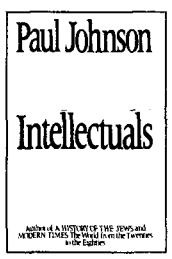

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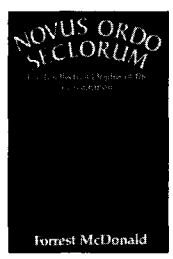

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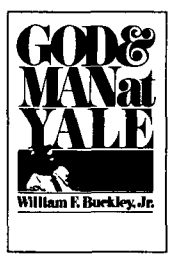

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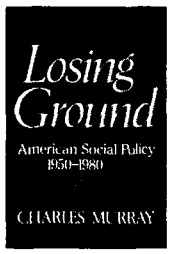

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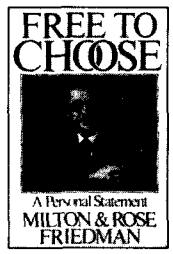

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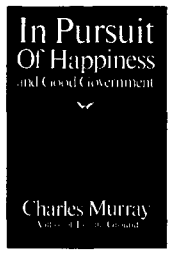

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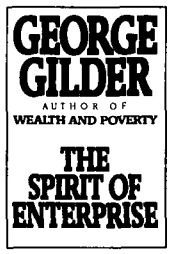

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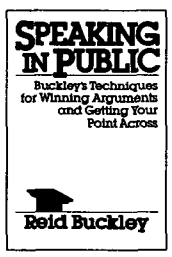

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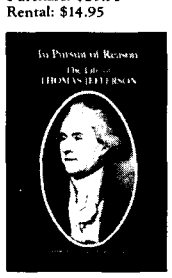

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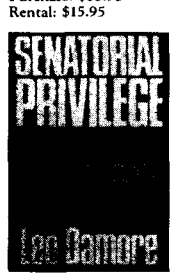

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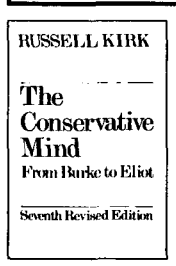

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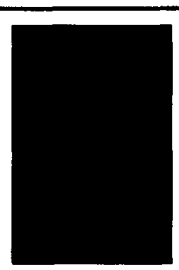
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TRASHING THE PLANET: HOW SCIENCE CAN HELP US DEAL WITH ACID RAIN, DEPLETION OF THE OZONE, AND NUCLEAR WASTE (AMONG OTHER THINGS)

Dixy Lee Ray with Lou Guzzo/Regnery Gateway/206 pp. $18.95

Michael Fumento

"No respectable scientist denies" that we are undergoing global warming, stated Strobe Talbott in *Time* magazine in 1989. Since then, several studies by such respected institutions as MIT and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration have revealed no global warming trend. Undaunted, James Burke, a world-renowned science journalist and producer of the alarming "After the Warming" program for PBS, tells a reporter that any debate over the issue is a "supreme irrelevance," that "the real issue is whether we take out any form of insurance against it." The premium for this policy would be as much as $3.6 trillion, according to one estimate, along with tremendous changes in living standards.

In 1990, more than 200 environmentalist books flooded our bookstores and our senses. Most asserted that the earth was going to hell in a handbasket, or at any rate that it certainly would unless you bought the book. (At least one, however, Bill McKibben's *The End of Nature*, stated that the earth *has* gone to hell, and thus even buying his book wouldn't help.) Like Talbott and Burke, the authors of the vast majority of these books seem much more concerned with solving alleged environmental problems than with establishing whether or not they exist.

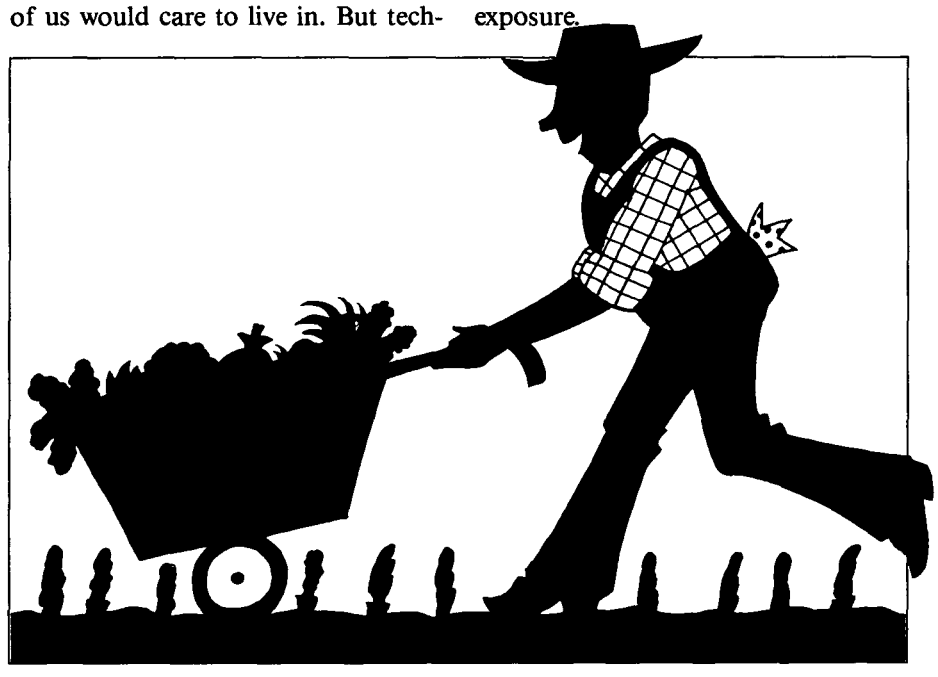
Stepping into the debate, such as it is, is Dixy Lee Ray—former governor of Washington, chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, assistant secretary of state in the U.S. Bureau of the Oceans, among other things—and journalist Lou Guzzo. They have cleverly entitled their book *Trashing the Planet*, thus ensuring that "politically conscious" bookstore managers, who regularly screen out "undesirable" books based on their titles, will stock this one. But far from being just another waste of timber, this is a revealing and responsible book which deserves to be on the shelf of everyone who calls himself an environmentalist. It defines problems before giving answers, and then the answers it gives are based not on the destruction of individuality, chosen lifestyles, and the free market but upon the application of scientific technology.

Of course, to those whom the authors criticize, and who will be quick to criticize the book, this is a physical impossibility. After all, is not science the culprit? Was not the world a happier, better, cleaner place in the days before the automobile, the nuke plant, pesticides, and preservatives?

This is the first myth that the authors debunk, that we have strayed dangerously far from "the natural age" that so many environmentalists romanticize in their books, lectures, and television shows. Taking advantage of her somewhat advanced age, Ray, 75, grants that in the "natural age" into which she was born carbon monoxide and ozone pollution weren't problems, but the streets were practically paved with pony pooh. Kerosene, coal, and wood pollution filled the air indoors and out. (London's famous "fog," for example, was actually pollution from millions of wood stoves, now replaced by natural gas, oil, or electric heaters.) It was, by today's standards, a filthy world of discomfort and disease. Heating was poor, air conditioning and refrigeration non-existent. Most people knew someone who had been horribly crippled or killed by syphilis. Like Uganda, it was a place many of us would like to visit but few of us would care to live in. But technology carries a price, and new types of pollution and other problems have sprung up to replace the old. They are not as numerous and generally not as severe, but they are problems nonetheless.

The authors discuss nearly all the big environmental bugaboos: the greenhouse effect, the ozone layer, asbestos, pesticides, dioxins, acid rain, and the uses of radioactive materials. Indeed, they could be criticized for trying to cover too much ground in too little space. The book devotes, for example, only eighteen pages to both the ozone and global warming problems. Even Calvin Coolidge would need more room than that to lay out the arguments. Alar, dioxins, asbestos, and PCBs get only seventeen pages between them. This is fine for reinforcing the beliefs of the sympathetic or appealing to the truly open-minded, but on all of these issues the public has been bombarded with propaganda from movie and television stars, the media, and a few scientists as well. Getting them to open up their minds and change their beliefs is an Augean task.

Nevertheless, the authors use their space wisely; their criticisms are thoughtful, factual, and damning. Concerning the ozone layer, for example, they note that "the best measurement data indicate that the ozone layer increased in average thickness during the 1960s and decreased during 1979-86. The decreases were comparable in magnitude to the increases of the 1960s." One of the terrors envisioned by the prophets of ozone depletion is a massive increase in skin cancers due to increasing penetration of ultraviolet rays. In fact, the authors note, instruments set up in 1974 have found continually decreasing penetration of such radiation. Malignant melanoma, the type of skin cancer that has been greatly increasing in incidence, is unrelated to ultraviolet exposure.



Ray and Guzzo excel in the sections concerning nuclear power and waste and nuclear medicine. "It is interesting to note that in our society," they write, "$200,000 is spent annually on safety improvements to save a single life in an automobile accident—where 50,000 deaths occur each year. But in the nuclear industry $2 billion is spent yearly to save one life, even though there have been no fatalities." Nuclear waste is certainly a serious problem, but like most of the truly serious environmental problems, it has been exaggerated. This is especially so with low-level nuclear waste. Note the authors wryly, "According to the rules covering low level waste, that amount should mean that people cannot be buried, cremated, or disposed of in garbage."

The authors' critique of alternative power sources such as wind and solar is also enlightening. The problem with these is that when one looks at construction costs as well as the costs of the fuels themselves (obviously wind and sunlight are free), wind and solar energy are considerably more expensive than fossil fuels and nuclear energy, both in dollars per unit of energy and in accidents and lost lives (although as photovoltaic technology improves, solar will become cheaper and safer). The authors mention a 1980 rock concert at the University of Wisconsin that the student sponsors wished to power by solar energy. When they found out it would take two acres of collectors to do the job, they settled for three windmills instead:

> Came the day of the concert—and no wind. But the students had taken this problem into account and switched to their backup system, which was a hookup to the city of Madison's electrical supply. The windmills turned nicely, although one of them went backward. Since 32 percent of Madison's power comes from nuclear plants, it could be said that one of the three windmills used by the students was nuclear-powered.

But why all the disinformation? Much of the problem results from a mistransmission of data from scientists to the media. It can be broken down into three types: *anxiety*, a general belief that there is an inherent conflict between technology and humanity; *factoids*, false, exaggerated, or misleading information that acquires credibility through constant repetition; and simple *misinterpretation*. Blaming the media for everything is an easy way to score points, and to the authors' credit they willingly criticize scientists and pseudoscientists for putting emotion and faith before facts, and the scientific community in general for failing to weed out the phonies. Some of the disinformers honestly believe their cries of doom, but others are smarter than that.

Michael Fumento is the author of The Myth of Heterosexual AIDS.

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One proponent of the theory that chlorofluorocarbons are depleting the ozone layer stated, "We have to offer up scary scenarios, make simplified, dramatic statements, and make little mention of any doubts we may have. Each of us has to decide what the right balance is between being effective and being honest."

Part of the problem, too, is simple egocentricism. As they dispute theories of man's rightful domination over nature, environmentalists often exaggerate his ability to affect the ecosystem. After adducing evidence on the amounts of pollution emitted by volcanoes and absorbed by oceans and other natural forces, the authors conclude, "In light of the enormous size of the atmosphere and the hydrosphere, and the colossal natural forces involved, it would appear that man's puny activities are being vastly exaggerated."

There is also the risk-free society, which declares that old risks (such as coal-burning plants and coal mining) are acceptable, but that new risks (such as pesticides and nuclear plants) are not:

> Here we are, in the final decade of the twentieth century, a once buoyant nation with unbounded faith in the future and in our ability to make it better, but now so possessed by self-doubt and recrimination and so frightened that something might go wrong that we are unwilling to accept even minute amounts of personal or environmental risk.

Perhaps the most important reason the environmentalists are so eager to implement drastic solutions to what may prove to be non-problems is that they simply happen to like those solutions. If a government inspector told you that you had termites in your mud-and-straw walls, you might be skeptical. But if you were told that the solution was to be given a brand new, more spacious brick house, what would you care if the termite assertion proved untrue? Indeed, you'd be training termites to eat mud.

It is not coincidental that the draconian solutions suggested by environmental extremists, from forced sterilization to elimination of internal combustion engine vehicles to expenditures of trillions of corporate and tax dollars, seem to have a common thread of austerity, rejection of free market principles, and greater centralized control of the populace. The brownshirts of sixty years ago have counterparts among the greenshirts of today. True environmentalists will reject these interlopers and embrace those who identify the real problems and offer real solutions. This book is a good start. □

PRESTON STURGES BY PRESTON STURGES

Edited by Sandy Sturges/Simon and Schuster/352 pp. $22.95

Amos Blood

In America, it's not that we don't produce great men. It is rather that we rarely recognize them when we do. We know a celebrity when we see one —a performer (in the broadest sense of the word) who makes us want to watch or listen to him—but that is a different matter. True greatness is usually quieter, less obtrusive, or else it appears to us as the sort of strangeness from which we would prefer to avert our eyes. Above all, we don't like troublemakers, and genius is nothing if not troublemaking.

Hollywood, especially, has always been full of examples of under-appreciated greatness (and over-appreciated mediocrity), and the writer-director Preston Sturges, who did more than anyone else to introduce the studio system to the *auteur*, is one of the most outstanding. Having produced some of the brightest, wittiest, most intelligent comedies of the 1930s and '40s, he died alone, penniless and all-but-forgotten in 1959, just after having completed an autobiography with which he had hoped to recoup his fortunes.

That book, which had the typically clever title, *The Events Leading Up to My Death*, was a flop, but it has now been recut and reissued by his fourth wife and widow, Sandy Sturges, as *Preston Sturges by Preston Sturges*. It is a wonderful book and deserves to be an American classic, the twentieth-century equivalent of *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*. Where Ben defined the personality that eventually made America Top Nation, Preston sets out for us the image of America in its ascendancy; where Ben is earnest and didactic, Preston is funny and humane. It was worth a century and a half of hard work and self-denial to produce so irresponsible but endlessly entertaining a character as Preston Sturges.

He was a natural storyteller who was blessed with a life full of stories, most of the best of which he owed to his mother. She was a splendidly eccentric lady and friend of Isadora Duncan who dragged him all over Europe in his earliest years in pursuit of one mad project, or marriage, after another. There naturally followed the events leading up to the fund of excellent stories in this volume. As, for example, when his mother decided to raise exotic fowl for the table in France:

> About this time somebody gave me a Lavrock hunting dog puppy. One day, scooting around on her oversized puppy paws, she caught a chicken and amidst a fearful din dispatched it rapidly. I didn't know much about training her, but somebody told me that if the chicken the dog had killed were tied around the dog's neck until the chicken rotted off, the dog would forever avoid any chicken, dead or alive, like the burned child who forever fears the flame. Maybe the pup's olfactory sense wasn't very highly developed, or maybe she didn't make the connection between the killing and the rotting carcass trussed around her neck, or maybe she just didn't give a damn, because she kept right on chewing up all the chickens she could get her teeth into for the rest of her life. Since she was always wearing a chicken in an advanced stage of decomposition around her neck, she didn't smell very inviting either.
>
> Nevertheless, she managed to get herself in the family way, and the next thing you know we had nine chicken murderers running around the place, all wearing dead chickens around their necks. I think we even tried a dead goose collar one time, but it didn't work any better than had the chicken collars.

On the evidence of this book, Preston Sturges as a boy was himself a little like these dogs—and like his mother: naughty, bright, enterprising, and completely untamable. From the time of his earliest memory until he went to

Amos Blood is the pseudonym of a Washington writer.

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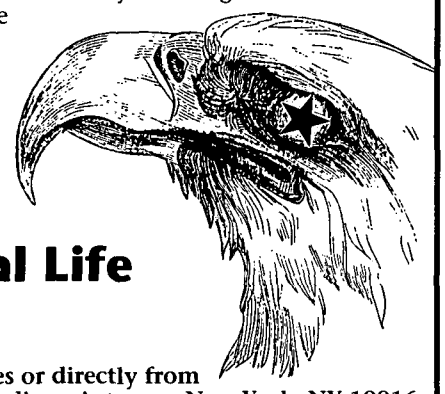

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Hollywood as a scriptwriter in the early 1930s he lived at breakneck speed and was lucky indeed not to have broken his neck, literally or figuratively, on several occasions. Something of the life of the story goes out of it, however, when his mother dies in 1931 with an untypically epigrammatic flourish: "There is no tragedy in dying," she said, "only in never having lived."

His mother died and he went to Hollywood at about the same time, when he was 33 years old, but the last twenty-seven years of his life occupy only the final fifth of this book. What has even Hollywood got to offer to compete with the first half of such a life as his? It is a disappointment that there is not a more exhaustive account of the great days of movie-making from one who was so much a part of them, but if you come to this book expecting a gossipy, inside account of the lives of the stars you misunderstand it and its author. Sturges was always (and almost always to his credit) an outsider in Hollywood, looked on with suspicion and dislike by those who played by the rules.

His versatility also made him unusual in a town so addicted to typecasting as Hollywood in the 1930s. For years when he was a lowly scriptwriter, trying with more or less success to escape from the mad studio system in which "writers worked in teams, like piano movers," he struggled for the chance to show what he could do as compleat filmmaker, a creature then all but unknown in America:

> I badgered Mr. William LeBaron, the production chief, to allow me to direct, suggesting those pictures on the roster for future production that no one could direct as well as I, if I could once be allowed to prove it. Always his response echoed the constant advice I received from well-meaning friends: "Shoemaker, stick to your last." It took years before I found the answer to that one: "Show me the man who has stuck to his last, and I'll show you a shoemaker."

Of course, he finally did get his chance to direct and won an academy award for *The Great McGinty* and nominations for *The Miracle of Morgan's Creek* and *Hail the Conquering Hero.* In 1948, just past the peak of his success, he was supposed to be the third highest paid man in America; but Uncle Sam got most of the money that wasn't swallowed up by his loss-making businesses and he fell a victim to that old Hollywood bugbear, "changing tastes." For a time he lived in Europe, where his work was more highly regarded than in his own country, and he even wrote and directed a film for which every scene was shot twice, once in French and once in English. It was not a big success in either language.

Naturally enough, a man who had enjoyed great success but who spent most of the last decade of his life trying to make ends meet had a word or two to say about the evils of what, after thirty years, the liberals are once again learning to pretend is "fairness" in taxation. Sturges's meditation on the subject goes back to his school days in France:

> Many of the boys at school with me were dukes and barons and marquis and all the rest of the titles so popular in France and all the other democracies since the fall of the Bastille. It was all very democratic, though, and so that no one, large or small, might appear richer than anyone else nor the faintest whiff of plutocracy infest our grove of learning, each one of us, by school regulation, received the same amount of pocket money, to wit, fifty centimes a week, a sum at that time equal to just under ten cents. This allowance really was not enough, even for boys marooned out in the country far from the fleshpots of Paris. Just as grown men will invariably find some way around an unjust or stupid rule, Prohibition, for example, or the present confiscatory taxes, so will boys, or any other group of humans, find ways to accommodate themselves to arbitrary decrees.
>
> Their way was to work an elaborate scam with the local shops by which the boys would pretend to buy various items of school uniform or sports equipment which would be billed to their parents. Then, instead of taking their ostensible purchases, they would leave them for the shopkeeper to re-sell, often to another phantom buyer, and simply pocket the money. Of course, boys being boys, they finally went a little too far. When one boy's father asked to see the rowing machine for which he had been billed, the miserable child was forced to stammer out, "I lost it while taking a walk." As the father was not disposed to be persuaded that his son had taken a walk with a rowing machine, the whole thing came out and their little arrangement was called off. But pocket money was increased.

Somehow, all his experience of both success and failure as a filmmaker and public man, that which gives the autobiographer a claim upon our attention, seems to come back to these early years spent tagging along with his mother to exotic places and meeting fascinating people. His life turns out to have been even more extraordinary than his films, though we should scarcely have known about it but for the work of his maturity. Now the life seems to be returning the favor, since a revival of interest in the man has led MCA/Universal to promote its release of much of the Sturges *oeuvre* on home video cassettes. These films deserve a place in your library alongside this book. □

DOROTHY HEALEY REMEMBERS: A LIFE IN THE AMERICAN COMMUNIST PARTY

Dorothy Healey and Maurice Isserman
Oxford University Press/263 pp. $22.95

Ronald Radosh

As Theodore Draper has pointed out, the resurrection of the sordid past of the American Communist party has become an academic industry. That resurrection has centered on trying to disprove the thesis asserted by Draper and reiterated by Harvey Klehr, that "even at the price of virtually committing political suicide, American Communism would continue above all to serve the interests of Soviet Russia." The new scholars argue that the Popular Front, which existed from 1935 to 1939, demonstrated that American Communists had a capacity for independent thinking, that they sought above all to adapt their radicalism to American political traditions and practice, giving only lip service to solidarity with the Soviet Union.

Hence the growth of the "radicalism of nostalgia," as Draper calls it, which is nothing less than a "campaign for the rehabilitation of American Communism." Central to this effort has been the historian Maurice Isserman, who writes in his introduction to this volume that "the American CP was shaped by the national environment in which it operated and the people who enlisted under these banners." One of these—indeed, a culture hero to the remnants of the once anti-Stalinist left—is Dorothy Ray Healey, a vivacious, dynamic, and charming young Communist of the 1930s who rose to the leadership of California's maverick branch in the forties and fifties.

Even by the FBI's standards, Healey was unusual; one of J. Edgar Hoover's agents called her "one of the most capable, articulate and theoretically developed Communist Party members in Los Angeles." Having left the ranks of the faithful in the 1970s, partially as a result of her opposition to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, Healey serves on the national leadership of the late Michael Harrington's Democratic Socialists of America. She still sees herself as an organizer for socialism — this time outside the party that she holds is politically and intellectually bankrupt. When she moved to Washington, D.C., in the early eighties, her arrival was heralded by a full page in the Style section of the *Washington Post.* Healey is today perhaps the most celebrated and respected of the ex-Communists.

Healey deserves credit for her work in the 1930s, when she bucked the violence of growers, vigilantes, and local police to organize Mexican and Okie migrant workers. By 1939, with the election of the leftist Culbert Olson as governor of California, and a lieutenant governor who was in Healey's words "close to the Party," unionism became legal in California's Imperial Valley, and Healey herself was appointed to a state agency protecting labor rights.

At the same time, she was proclaiming her allegiance to Joseph Stalin and the most brutal of totalitarian regimes abroad, and trying to inflict on her own country the principles and politics of the Soviet Union. Indeed, although Isserman argues that Healey took the long road toward casting off "tradition's chains," her story shows that despite all her travails, she has learned little. Indeed, Healey is a prototypical Communist, as described by Aileen S. Kraditor in her neglected masterpiece, *Jimmy Higgins: The Mental World of the American Rank-and-File Communist, 1930-1958* (Greenwood Press, 1988). This Communist, Kraditor points out, lived in a universe in which all tenets fit together to form an integrated worldview:

> And he deduced "empirical" facts from his perception of "reality." Since the elements all fit together, they are less vulnerable to the lessons of experience than are the beliefs

Ronald Radosh, co-author of The Rosenberg File, *is a historian who writes frequently about Communism.*

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of people who judge issues one by one. When a program produces unintended consequences, ideologues rarely reconsider their theory but rather blame . . . something else that allows them to keep their faith in their ideology and its future validation.

Dorothy Healey still maintains the faith of the true believer. She has merely shifted that faith to an undefinable "socialism" that she holds the party betrayed after 1968.

Take her analysis of the Nazi-Soviet Pact. Healey holds the same position she did in 1939: that Stalin was protecting the best interests of his country against Western appeasers of fascism, gaining time to defeat Hitler. Her minor heresy is to argue that American Communists should not have translated Soviet diplomatic and strategic needs into political directives, thus downplaying their own opposition to Hitlerism. Her arguments are unadulterated Stalinist apologies. It was, of course, the *sine qua non* of the party to treat Stalin's goals as political directives. How could one justify the pact and not treat British imperialism—rather than Nazism—as the main evil in the world of 1939? Healey fails to see that the pact was merely an agreement between two dictatorships to define their spheres of influence. She has obviously not read any of the new studies of the pact and of Soviet history—the work of Wolfgang Leonhard, for example.

Leonhard nails the lie that the pact was a means of buying time. In fact, during the pact years, the USSR was drained of the very products and materials needed for defense preparations. The "buying time" argument did not arise until Germany invaded the Soviet Union. In reality, the delay was used more effectively for rearmament by Hitler than by Stalin.

Constantly, Healey tells us how she and her comrades were so busy with practice that they had no time for reading, thinking, or theory. This was reserved for party leaders such as Earl Browder and William Z. Foster, the fountainheads of all wisdom. Classes in Marxism amounted to learning formulae by rote, and proving one's ability to defend the current party line.

Healey is today seen as the epitome of a "good" ex-Communist, yet, in her trajectory through the party, she was never a reformer—these were led by John Gates, the editor of the *Daily Worker*—but a party centrist who supported the lukewarm efforts at change led by Eugene Dennis, who capitulated to the hardliners immediately after the famed Khrushchev report on Stalin. Gates had the temerity to say that the concept of a dictatorship of the proletariat was wrong, to support dissolving the party in favor of a broad socialist organization, and to condemn the Soviet invasion of Hungary. Healey, on the other hand, publicly said that the Soviet invasion "was a tragic necessity," in order to save socialism from CIA- and fascist-inspired forces.

Later, she would complain about the animosity with which her former comrades treated her. And even today, she cannot refrain from condemning Gates for "self-serving recklessness," for being a "supreme egoist," and for using the paper he edited to disseminate what Healey still views as anti-party ideas.

Healey also shows a remarkable inability to re-evaluate the anti-Communism of others. Of the anti-Stalinist left, many of whom are her current comrades in the DSA, she says that they "paved the way" for McCarthyism, although she acknowledges that not all liberals were willing to throw Communists "to the wolves." Evidently, those who criticized the party for its politics and its ideology were also McCarthyite. She writes about two trips to the Soviet Union in the 1960s as part of a delegation of top American Communist leaders. She calls it seeing socialism "from a limousine window," but is strangely silent about how,

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as she told me some years ago, she brought thousands of dollars back in a suitcase, with which the American party bought its new headquarters on West 23rd Street in New York City. She is hard on Angela Davis—whom she recruited to the party—for touring Eastern Europe in the 1960s and supporting the attacks on dissidents by the Czech Communist leadership. But she does not see that Davis was only applying the lessons she learned in the Communist party, and that Davis, not Healey, represents the real face of American Communism.

Healey cannot stomach those ex-Communists who feel "bitterness" about their wasted years in the movement, and has only gratitude for gaining "knowledge that we never could have gotten in any other way." What knowledge? That the Soviet Union led the path to the future? That socialism was the inevitable hope of humanity? That Stalin was the greatest leader on earth? That the United States was the evil power that stood in the way of the world's people?

Healey has left the party, but still accepts its worldview as the Truth. She writes that those who saw life in the Soviet Union as a "dreary totalitarian prison" were being deceived; that much of the Soviet people's suffering was due to the "hostility of the nonsocialist world," and that, after the war, "life improved dramatically for most Soviet citizens." Tell it to the average Soviet worker who stands on line for toilet paper five hours a day, fights in a department store for the few remaining pairs of ill-fitting shoes, lives with three generations of family in a tiny apartment, and can look forward to an old age spent in dire poverty. Problems, yes, but to Healey the USSR still sets the agenda for the future. Her book was written before the current crackup of Communism. One wonders whether recent events have caused her to shed these remaining illusions, or whether she still feels that those bad East Europeans have mistakenly thrown out the socialist baby with the Communist bathwater?

Given such weak logic and embarrassing party-line rhetoric, is Healey important enough to discuss? Unfortunately—as long as major American intellectuals such as the distinguished historian and playwright Martin Bauml Duberman can call her one of America's "true heroes," and the popular feminist socialist writer Barbara Ehrenreich, Healey's DSA comrade, can call her "one of the American left's most brilliant and fearless women"—one has no other choice. Poor Healey. □

UNDER GOD: RELIGION AND AMERICAN POLITICS

Garry Wills/Simon and Schuster/445 pp. $24.95

Richard Brookhiser

Even as the election book has become a genre, so has the post-election book: the jottings from the campaign trail that blossom into something quite different. Garry Wills's *Under God* is the latest example.

What Wills noticed in the course of covering the last campaign for *Time* and PBS, was the unwillingness of his fellow journalists to notice the religiosity of American life and politics. "The right wing," he writes, "regularly deplores 'liberal bias' in the media, trying to count how many Democrats there are in the working press. . . . It could more tellingly reflect on the number of churchgoers in the national press, as opposed to the general population; or on the uneasy way journalists talk about religion. . . . If religion intrudes too obviously, as in the case of Pat Robertson's campaign, this is treated as an anomaly. It is given special coverage by an outsider. 'Call Martin Marty' is the editor's easiest recourse for the special case. (Where narrowly Catholic or Jewish views are at issue, the call to Marty may be alternated with calls to Richard McBrien or Arthur Hertzberg.)" But in a country to which religion bequeathed prohibition, abolition, and half of the Thirteen Colonies, and in which two ministers and a former divinity student ran for President last time out, Wills believes that this will not do.

As in previous books, Wills has done his homework and his leg-work. We learn that Stanley Graham (of graham crackers) and John Harvey Kellogg (of Kellogg's Cornflakes) were both early disciples of Ellen White, a founder of Seventh-Day Adventism. We listen as Randall Terry, the leader of Operation Rescue, gives his reasons for disliking Thomas Aquinas: "I hate the Renaissance." We must also put up with a lot of ragged rewriting and loose ends. I remember reading some of the sections of *Under God* when they appeared as articles in magazines, and not only were they fresher, they seemed more thorough and better argued. Some larger themes do emerge from their hardcover afterlife, however.

The first is that America is still, to a great extent, a Protestant country. The last time Gallup counted, the ratio of Protestants to Catholics was just under two-to-one, while Mormons, Jews, and Moslems were down in the asterisks. Moreover, the "liberal" Protestant denominations—Episcopalians, Presbyterians, United Church of Christ—constitute a smallish minority of the Protestant mass. So when religion pops up in public life, it is often some form of Protestantism that is conservative, theologically if not politically. Wills, who is a liberal Catholic, thus spends most of his time writing about people who can scarcely be congenial to him. Yet he gives all their preoccupations a fair hearing.

A second theme is that America's Protestantisms have also been the source of much of what we consider enlightened about America. Wills makes a heroic effort to salvage the reputation of none other than William Jennings Bryan. Students of political history will know that anyone who ran for President three times with the nomination of a major party must have had something going for him. But most of us know Bryan only as the butt of *Inherit the Wind*. Echoing Richard Weaver, Wills argues that Bryan was drawn to the Scopes trial not because he was obsessed by biology, but because he feared the effects of Darwinian and Nietzschean social thought on a democratic republic. Wills's reflections on H. L. Mencken, who, besides being a delightful writer, was a *soi-disant* Nietzschean with a rather nasty streak of power-worship, will be of special interest to readers of this magazine.

Wills credits the Protestant churches with the separation of church and state. Roger Williams ran seventeenth-century Rhode Island like an ACLU chapter because he had such a lively fear of the Pope and his dupes (among whom he numbered John Winthrop) that he would not entrust power over religion into anyone's hands. He wanted the freedom to protect his own religion, not to attack other religions. Jefferson and Madison made similar arguments, and often counted Baptists among their political allies.

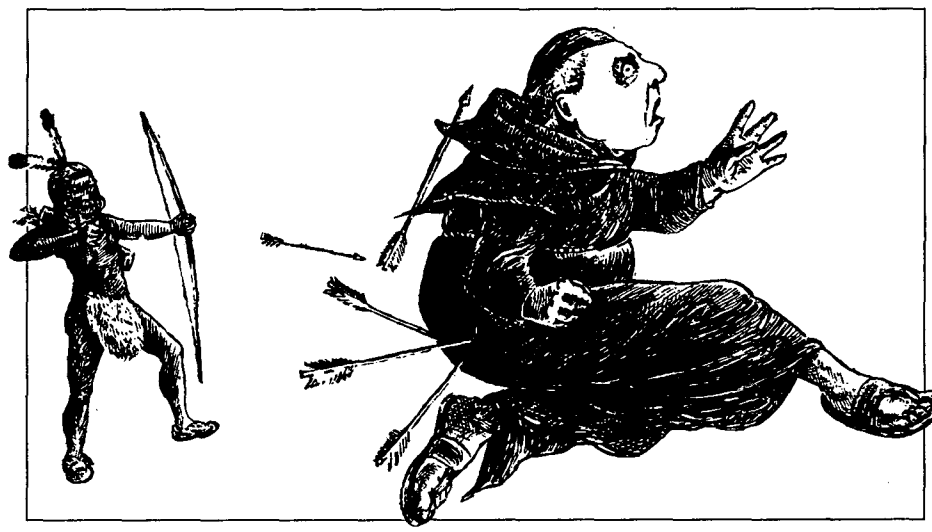
Wills doesn't think separation from the state entails silence in politics. He wants Americans with religiously grounded moral concerns to speak up. How does he treat them when they do?

If he approves of the cause, he goes weak in the knees. His chapters on black religious politicians are written in a tremolo that is relieved only by the sermons and spirituals he quotes. Wills on Jesse Jackson is no more insightful than Jackson on Jesse Jackson, and far less entertaining.

If he disapproves, as he ultimately does of the goals of evangelical opponents of pornography and abortion, his reaction is more complicated. He gives them their due (his portrait of Randall Terry is sympathetic), then drops the reportorial stance to argue that they are mistaken, calling Nabokov, Kierkegaard, Aquinas, and Augustine as expert witnesses. He wants the religious right to have its say; he just wants it to say different things. I wonder what impression his star-studded arguments will make on people who hate the Renaissance.

Wills's great omission is his failure to consider why the liberal Protestant denominations, small in number but still long on prestige, have such slight impact on public life. Vietnam was their last hurrah. Yet the only William Sloane Coffin who appears in *Under*

Richard Brookhiser, senior editor of National Review, *is author of the new book* The Way of the WASP: How It Made America, and How It Can Save It, So to Speak *(The Free Press).*



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God is William Sloane Coffin, Sr., who is mentioned as an ally, in a fight within the Presbyterian church, of William Jennings Bryan. *Sic transit gloria ecclesiae.* It is vital to know how and why elite Protestantism went off the rails, for as long as it remains politically marginal, American Protestantism is like a body without a head. Maybe Wills's sympathy with elite Protestantism's last political crusade prevents him from even noticing the question. □

THE BEST AMERICAN SHORT STORIES 1990
Edited by Richard Ford/Houghton Mifflin/374 pp. $19.95; $9.95 paper

Joe Queenan

The most voracious fiction *aficionada* I know says that she never touches short stories because "just when I start to get interested in the characters it's time to say goodbye." She wouldn't have any problem saying goodbye to most of the characters in this collection.

The Best American Short Stories 1990 is an anthology of mopey, muted, and frigid fiction that has previously surfaced in the *New Yorker* and the *Atlantic*, or—after being rejected by the *New Yorker* and the *Atlantic*—in literary magazines such as *Antaeus*, the *Hudson Review*, and *Ploughshares*. The twenty stories are, for the most part, written by creative writing teachers, or alumni of creative writing programs, and with maddening regularity deal with people connected with universities. Consider this: having decided to read the works in no particular order, I opened to a story called "The Reverse Bug," whose first sentence introduced a professor of Conversational English for Adults at Concordance University in Connecticut. I next read "Commuter Marriage," which deals with a woman in publishing who met her husband while he was getting his Ph.D. in German literature. I then read "You're Ugly, Too," which concerns a professor of American history at a small liberal arts college in the Midwest. By this time I was fed up and decided to continue riffling through the pages until I found a story I could be reasonably certain would not feature academics as protagonists. "The Fireman's Wife" by Richard Bausch fit the bill: a sturdy, competent, no-frills affair with a solid, proletarian core. Of course, Bausch is on the faculty of the writing program at George Mason University, so he should know.

A story called "Mr. Morning" deals with a Columbia University graduate student who gets a bizarre job doing research for a man she believes to be a murderer. "Nothing to Ask For" is a college buddy story with one twist: one of the buddies has AIDS. "Differently" begins with the words "Georgia once took a creative-writing course . . ." And even the stories that do not concern academics still involve the educational system in some way. Thus, a story called "Wigtime" is about high school chums; "The Wizard" deals with drug-dealing high school kids; and "The Secret of Cartwheels" is about school days in an orphanage. Obviously, school made a big impression on a lot of American short story writers. Most of them are still in it.

Also irksome is the collection's microscopic ethnic waveband. Basically, these are stories by WASPs about WASPs for WASPs. Consider the names of the authors: Edward Allen, Patricia Henley, Denis Johnson, Joy Williams, Joan Wickersham, Lorrie Moore, Dennis McFarland, Pam Houston, Padgett Powell, Elizabeth Tallent, Alice Munro, Madison Smartt Bell. Of the eighteen writers represented in this collection, I counted one Jew (maybe), no Italians, no Hispanics, no Poles, no blacks, no American Indians, and certainly no one of an exotic ethnic stripe (Indian, Jamaican, Lithuanian). The prototypical *Best* story is entitled "A Kind of Simple, Happy Grace" and appeared in the remorselessly twee magazine *Wigwag*. The man responsible for these selections is this year's guest editor, the writer Richard Ford. Richard Ford? *Wigwag*? Sounds like Garrison Keillor had a hand in this somewhere.

While reading these stories I kept asking myself if the authors had any idea how tiny and constricted the world they occupy is. Does it ever occur to them that they deal again and again with an emotional terrain—the disappointment of the middle-class college graduate—that John Cheever worked to death decades ago? Don't they themselves ever grow weary of their arctic prose, with its winsome descriptions of crestfallen children's-book illustrators and melancholy divorcees? Are ennui and dismay, disgruntlement and rue the only emotions they feel? Don't any of these people ever get really, really ticked off? Or load up the van with a couple of six-packs and burn rubber down the Interstate—just for the hell of it? Reading these stories is like listening to a mildly arthritic aunt complain about having to wait forty-five minutes to get fitted for a new cane. You sort of see her point. You just wish she'd shut up and drink her Maalox.

Happily there are a few exceptions to this group moping, as Ford has selected several stories by writers whose crackling prose makes his own indifferent prose sound . . . well, prosaic. "Car-Crash While Hitchhiking," which reads more like a poem than a short story, makes an impression, and "The Wizard" is enlivened by some fairly uproarious diction. "Eisenheim the Illusionist," which appeared in *Esquire*, is a nice, traditional sort of story that owes a lot to Borges, Kafka, Thomas Mann, and even Marcel Aymé. Another story that makes you sit up and pay attention is a strange little number called "Typical" by Padgett Powell, which deals with a real nasty SOB from deep in the heart of Texas who begins the story by declaring:

> Yesterday a few things happened. Every day a few do. My dog beat up another dog. He does this when he can. It's his living, more or less, though I never let him make money doing it. He could. Beating up other dogs is his thing. He means no harm by it, expects other dogs to beat him up—no anxiety about it. If anything makes him nervous, it's that he won't get a chance to beat up or be beaten up. He's healthy. I don't think I am.

Not only is the foul-mouthed rattlesnake who narrates the story kind of fascinating, but the author's biographical note, in which he explains how the story came into being, may be more riveting than just about anything else in the entire book. Still, my favorite story was "In a Father's Place," which pits a small-town lawyer and patriarch against a woman who would rather sit at home reading Jacques Derrida than go yachting. The fact that somebody wrote a story such as this is a step in the right direction for our civilization. The fact that a repeat offender like Richard Ford included it in his *Best American Short Stories 1990* is a cause for celebration. □

Joe Queenan is a frequent contributor to Barron's *and other publications.*

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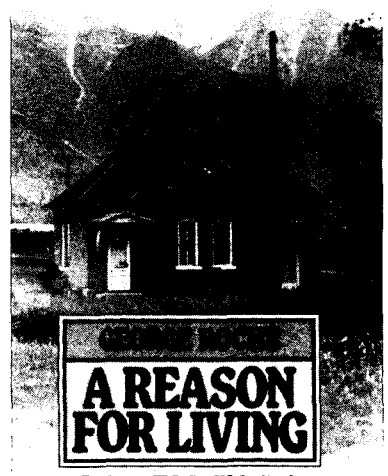

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are in the market for a new hobby, would have a little list of opportunities to join *and sabotage* the machinations of a variety of neo-Marxist social clubs and loose clumps of left-leaning organisms. Think of the confusion we could sow, the dissension, the internecine warfare, the practical jokes!

In the meantime, I'd like to take a swipe at welfare queens by suggesting two names for the Enemies List, if you haven't already mentioned them—that guy *Andreas* who makes tax subsidies gush from corn-based auto fuel, and that guy *Iacocca* who took my tax money all right, but refuses to sell me what I want—a good old-fashioned gas guzzler so I can thumb my nose at Andreas and that pompous earth-lover woman on the Archer-Daniels-Midland TV commercial. (Hey, is she on the list?)

—J. Michael Bolinski
West Deptford, New Jersey

To P. J. O'Rourke and Charlotte Smith: Hold it, friends, Toledo isn't the Sorbonne either. In the schools of Springfield, Massachusetts, long ago, students were taught pronunciation, one example of which was the way to pronounce "aunt" so as to differentiate between your female relative and a member of the family *Formicidae*, or "ant."

It seemed a difference worth noting in New England—but maybe in Toledo the distinction doesn't matter. Either way, it's no excuse for bullying us with charges of Anglophobia. We are not Anglophiles. I actually heard an ancient swamp Yankee refer to the British as redcoats once—he thought no good would come of helping them out against the Huns. It was a while ago.

—Saul David
Springfield Classical High '37
Van Nuys, California

Please, *TAS*/P. J., we got enemies enough. Don't gun down our friends, even long departed ones.

The "Welfare State" was hardly the "inevitable result" of the "incessant whining" of Augustine of Hippo. Augustine's opinion of the state would fill any conservative with pride. "What are kingdoms but great robberies?" he asked. "For what are robberies themselves but little kingdoms? The band itself is made up of men; it is ruled by the authority of a prince; it is knit together by a pact of confederacy; the booty is divided up by the law agreed upon."

At its core, liberalism believes, not in the "innate rottenness" of mankind like Augustine, but in the innate goodness of its own elite. It believes, not in an unchanging (and sinful) human nature and society but in societal perfectability when led by themselves. Like Marxism, it believes the proper environment can create a "new man."

Pelagius, Augustine's opponent, better represents the liberal view. . . .

—Mike Perry
Seattle, Washington

As with the other installments of the New Enemies List, I laughed heartily—that is, when I wasn't doing a slow, indignant burn at the very thought that such persons and organizations as you list really do exist. Nonetheless, I have begun to develop a nagging fear (no doubt the result of brain-washing by the omnipresent liberal media) that the list is getting so long that there is no one of celebrity or note that isn't either already on the list or a candidate for future "inclusion." Your short "anti-blacklist roster" of Hollywood good guys did not assuage my fears on this score. I guess what I am really saying is that in the spirit of the "friends/enemies" distinction upon which this list stands or falls, I'd like to see a list—a long list—of *friends* (new and old) just to buoy up my sagging liberally co-opted spirits. Please forgive my lack of memory and/or imagination, but most of the *friends* I can think of are dead (or missing), and if we really start counting dead enemies (e.g., Augustine of Hippo), I fear that my faith will go into a total eclipse.

—Gayne Nerney
Murray, Kentucky

I swear, this is more fun than stealing blankets from the homeless. Bring out the cattle prods, oil the lash, grease the rack, sharpen the meathooks, hone the guillotine and let's get on with the fun: *Armand Hammer* (it must just break his heart to see statues of his beloved Lenin crashing to the ground all over the Soviet Union); *Jackson Browne*, *Willie Nelson*, and *Kris Kristofferson*—I love your music, guys, but I find your politics as appealing as a naked Molly Yard; *Female body builders*; *Ann Richards*, Molly Yard with make-up and a bee-hive. *Anything* owned by *Ted Turner*; *Anyone* who actually drives 55; *Anyone* who puts a little jacket on his dog; *Anyone* who really thinks Dave Barry is funnier than P. J. O'Rourke.

—Ron Ellis
Sandpoint, Idaho

Pen Pals

I recently received from one of your readers an order for my comparative anatomy chart *Penises of the Animal Kingdom*. The customer's letter referred to a "blurb about [the] famous all-male poster in *American Spectator*." You can imagine my surprise on hearing that a publication as culturally square as yours would be willing to publicize my product.

Well, I was even more surprised to discover that the "blurb" (which is printed in the "Current Wisdom" section of the November issue of *The American Spectator*, page 51) was actually a verbatim reprint of the classified advertisement for the poster as it appears in *Mother Jones* magazine.

I never would have believed that *The American Spectator* would accept an advertisement for *Penises of the Animal Kingdom*, considering that a vast majority of the self-proclaimed bastions of tolerance and free expression that make up the liberal media establishment (including the likes of *Playboy*, *Rolling Stone*, *Spy*, the *Nation*, and *Atlantic Monthly*) refuse to run my ads.

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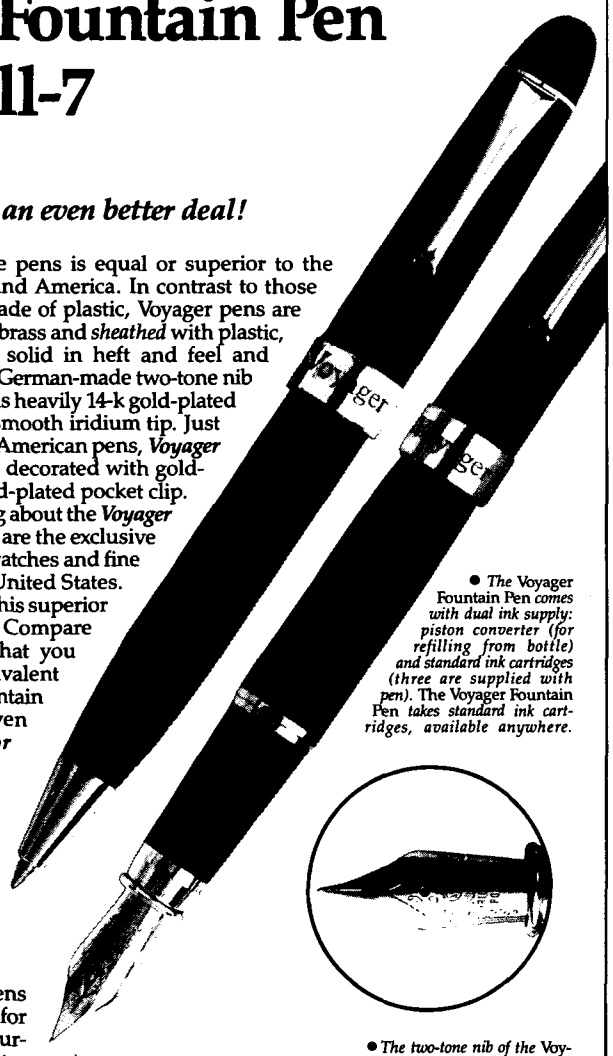

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—Jim Knowlton
Scientific Novelty
Bloomington, Indiana

Check the Oiler

I have not always lived in Moscow-on-the-Colorado. I am originally from Houston, and sojourn in this hotbed of leftists simply to learn the intricacies of how evil my nation has been and how to deconstructively analyze works of literature. I was born just outside of Houston, lived there ever since, and was always a part of the tradition Joe Queenan maligned so cruelly in the November issue (review of Jerry Glanville's *Elvis Don't Like Football* and Tom Landry's *Tom Landry*). That's right: I am a true-blue Oilers fan.

In the process of penning his wonderful assault upon useless bag of cells jerry glanville (sic), Mr. Queenan mocks the Oilers as a "third-rate" team. Indeed, under glanville (sic), they were not loved, and much talent was wasted due to his idiocy, but they were consistently a playoff team. A recent perusal of the sports page notes the Oilers to be in contention again, under a coach who ranks with Tom Landry in class and sportsmanship—not to mention knowledge of the game.

I was picked up as a child by Coach Bum Phillips as the Oilers boarded their plane for the AFC Championships a decade ago. Since then, through good and bad, I have been a fan, and happen to know hundreds of thousands of others. Mr. Queenan, I have decided to let it go and subscribe anyway, but from now on, please give the Oilers the recognition they deserve. They are not a team of glanvilles (sic): they have class, dignity, and a winning record, more than can be said of the once-mighty "America's team" a few hundred miles up Interstate 45.

—Matt F. Foster
Austin, Texas

Fuel for Thought

It is time to praise Michael Fumento's rare talent for sorting out controversial scientific matters ("What Kind of Fuel Am I?" *TAS*, November 1990). He provides welcome leavening for *TAS*'s amusing but otherwise unrelieved recounting of political idiocies. His discussion of alternative fuels merits a few emendations.

With respect to electric vehicles (EVs), it all depends on the battery. There is nothing left to improve in vehicles powered by lead-acid batteries, which have been around since the turn of the century. Promised breakthroughs in EVs have been "a few years away" for decades. A good rule of thumb is that a specific technological development predicted several years in advance will never see the light of day. Remember the predictions for gas turbine cars, and the Stirling and Minto engines. Also, many of the candidate battery technologies pose environmentally nasty recycling problems.

It gets worse. In 1978, I was asked by the National Academy of Sciences to prepare a prediction of U.S. energy supply in the early twenty-first century. By simple default, I concluded that electricity would become the dominant energy source for stationary applications, since only coal, nuclear, and hydro would remain relatively cheap in large quantities. Nothing has occurred since then to alter this conclusion. For political and technical reasons, the vast new electricity requirement of EVs would come mostly from coal, at least for the next decade or two. Because coal is mostly carbon, it produces much more carbon dioxide per unit of energy than any other source. If the atmospheric carbon dioxide threat proves genuine, achieving success with electric vehicles would be a major environmental setback.

Even if the electricity for EVs were to come from fission, fusion, or some other "clean" source, total rebuilding of the electricity distribution system would be required. Because EVs are recharged at the distal ends of the system, the transformer on the pole outside your house would have to be doubled in size, along with all the wires stretching from the power plant to your circuit-breaker panel. And think of the increase in electromagnetic fields that presently have the Luddites biting their fingernails!

Fumento stumbles in dealing with solar energy. It is pointless to put photovoltaic cells on cars. Notwithstanding cute demonstration projects, the surface area of cars is not large enough to allow solar to make a difference. The fact that the Arabs invest heavily in solar research means nothing. A lot of people have thrown money at solar, wind, geothermal, etc. with little progress against the basic truth that these resources are too diffuse for economic harvesting on a scale that can satisfy the earth's present population.

He writes that liquid fuels "will eventually go the way of whale oil," implying that perforce they will be replaced with something better. This faith in "fresh alternative ideas" is what psychologists call denial. A peculiar superstition has arisen among some conservatives (Julian Simon et al.) that the problems of the future are bound to be solved in the nick of time by our scientists and engineers. Having served time in both capacities, I offer the observation that technological developments cannot be willed. They emerge in their own good time, if at all.

The fact is that no alternative energy sources yet developed or foreseen can fill the energy supply gap that will open in the next century, aside from the receding apparition of fusion power. On the demand side of the ledger, energy conservation is no panacea, either. Even if pushed to its limit, conservation cannot compensate for more than a single doubling of population.

—Donald R. Wulfinghoff, P.E.
President, Wulfinghoff Energy Services
Wheaton, Maryland

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THE LEMLEY LETTER

For the Individual Investor

We have moved to a 50% to 60% invested position in most accounts by doing our Christmas shopping early. Since institutional investors have turned most technology stocks into 1989's biggest turkeys, we, ever the contrarians, have done some simple reasoning. If the market is going higher, the tech stocks will eventually participate, and if the market is going lower the tech stocks seem so sold out that lower prices will only make them more irresistible. By any standard, with IBM, Hewlett Packard, and Digital Equipment selling at 1.2 times book, and .8 times sales, even old Ben Graham's eyes would be brightening.

. . . still only 50%

But computer makers are the only area that stirs our juices. Really folks, we aren't being obstinate ostriches. The pendulum swings and the farther up it goes the harder down it will come. That doesn't mean it will happen with a "whoosh" (or a "swoosh" in Nike's case), and it may be rotational—but, up till now, only in Japan do stocks climb to the sky and keep on going.

—from The Lemley Letter
dated December 1989

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CURRENT WISDOM

Chicago Tribune

How *The American Spectator* and *National Review* ruined the reputation of John Updike and set the Feminist Terror upon him, as reported by Ms. Garry Wills:

On the subject of snobbery, I did not object to Rabbit's social standing but to Updike's—that of the reactionary dandy trying to disguise an aesthete's cult of violence by using a working man as his stalking horse.

The snobbishness is Updike's, who resembles William Buckley and Tom Wolfe in the glorification of greed and violence as a form of patriotism. No wonder right-wing journals such as *The American Spectator* and *National Review* called *Rabbit at Rest* Updike's masterpiece.

It will not do to say that Rabbit the wife-beater is just expressing his own misogyny, not Updike's. Even some who praised the novel—in *New York* magazine and *TLS*—admitted the narrative voice is as misogynist as the character being described.

The novelist Mary Gordon faces this issue squarely in a book of essays that will appear next spring, where she says the problem of misogyny must enter into a judgment of Updike as fully as the problem of anti-Semitism enters into one's response to Ezra Pound.

[November 10, 1990]

Nation

A curious outburst from Christabel Hitchens, occasioned by his avid perusal of the greatest presidential memoir in the history of the world:

These pathetic, self-aggrandizing and self-pitying lies, taken at random from *An American Life: The Autobiography*, are no disgrace to the ex-President who "uttered" them. It cannot be helped, with Ronald Wilson Reagan, that every word he says is a lie, including the words "and" and "but." The truly disgraceful paragraph in the book comes not in the main text but in the acknowledgments:

Robert Lindsey, a talented writer, was with me every step of the way. . . . The wonderful and thoroughly professional team at Simon and Schuster, under the able leadership of CEO Dick Snyder, were there day and night. . . . Editor in chief Michael Korda patiently read every word time and time again, dotted every *i* and crossed every *t*—no one could ask for a better editor. Charlie Hayward, Alice Mayhew, and Jack McKeown were also of invaluable assistance. And Mort Janklow, my literary agent. . . .

Yeah, yeah. My question is this: Why are none of the above bringing suit against Reagan for defamation? The book he has "written" is a digest and concoction of easily detectible and contemptible falsehoods. Do the above-named really choose to be implicated? . . . Snyder, Korda, Mayhew and the rest are people of consequence in the publishing industry. None of them, as far as I know, have any difficulty paying the rent or taking a vacation. How can they make themselves accomplices to a fraud?

[November 26, 1990]

New York Times

Beginning with an extraordinarily dubious statement even by her standards, Miss Anna Quindlen, poet, philosopher, professional womanist, and *Times* columnist, indulges the feminist fevers for an entire column unrelieved even by an arf-arf, but quite properly concluded in hate:

My daughter is two years old today. She is something like me, only better. Or at least that is what I like to think. . . .

Little by little, in the 20 years between my eighteenth birthday and her second one, I learned how to live in the world. The fact that women were now making 67 cents for every dollar that a man makes—well it was better than 1970, wasn't it, when we were making only 59 cents? The constant stories about the underrepresentation of women, on the tenure track, in the film industry, in government, everywhere, had become commonplace. The rape cases. The sexual harassment stories. The demeaning comments. Life goes on. Where's your sense of humor? . . .

Maybe someday, years from now, my daughter will come home and say, "Mother, at college my professor acted as if my studies were an amusing hobby and at work the man who runs my department puts his hand on my leg and to compete with the man who's in the running for my promotion who makes more than I do I can't take time to have a relationship but he has a wife and two children and I'm smarter and it doesn't make any difference and some guy tried to jump me after our date last night." . . .

No. Today is her second birthday and she has made me see fresh this two-tiered world, a world that, despite all our nonsense about feminism, continues to offer less respect and less opportunity for women than it does for men. My friends and I have learned to live with it, but my little girl deserves better. She has given me my anger back, and I intend to use it well.

[November 22, 1990]

Orange County Register

One of the world's greatest newspapers captures the essence of Mrs. Carol Fennelly, disheveled femme fatale of the deceased nuisance Mitch Snyder, as Mrs. Fennelly laments the lack of necrophiliacs among her male cohorts:

"Forty-one isn't ancient, realize," she said recently, "but at the same time it's not twenty either. My kids are grown, so I have a degree of freedom. But look at who I am. I'm what they call a strong woman. . . . And so I'm having to deal with the very real possibility that I'll have to live the rest of my life as a single woman. . . . How many men are going to put up with a woman who goes to jail and dies for what she believes in?"

[October 24, 1990]

A Speech by Dr. Paula Rothenberg Delivered at the College of Wooster

The celebrated authoress of *Racism and Sexism: An Integrated Study*, demonstrates why Johnny can't read and is probably better off:

I think it is perfectly legitimate to study the ideas and the experience of privileged white European males. That belongs in college. The problem is when you universalize that experience and treat it as if it were all there were. . . . Contrary to what the right wing would have us believe, race, class, and gender have always been in the curriculum. The problem continues to be that it was one race, one class, one gender. . . .

According to this curriculum, only people of color have a race; only women have a gender; only lesbians and gays have a sexual orientation. Everyone else is a human being. According to this curriculum, neither women nor working people nor peoples of color have ever done anything important. Because by definition what is important was done by privileged white males and what was done by privileged white males was important. And all of them were heterosexual.

This curriculum teaches what I call the Flintstones-Jetsons view of history. According to that view, the white, middle-class, heterosexual, nuclear family with its attendant division of labor according to sexual stereotype has always existed—the Flintstones—and always will exist—the Jetsons.

[October 17, 1990]

New York Review of Books

Whilst reviewing still more facetiae from the mind of Harold Bloom, a Prof. John Barton strikes another blow for the improbable, the fantastic, and the just plain wrong:

I remember my surprise when a student of mine wrote a paper about the book of Job, and referred to the author throughout as "he or she." Perhaps such evenhandedness is now standard in North America, but it certainly isn't in Oxford. But I realized that I had simply assumed the author was male, without examining the reasons. Non-religious feminist critics became angry at the patriarchal attitudes in much of the Bible, while Jewish and Christian feminists often argue that, within the assumptions of an admittedly patriarchal society, the Bible scores quite highly for its treatment of women. But until now, no critic known to me has argued that any substantial part of the Bible had a woman as its author.

Professional scribes in the ancient world were men: so much we know or think we do. But was every book in the Bible written by a professional scribe? Probably not. Were women literate? Some, perhaps. By arguing that a singularly important section of the Hebrew Bible may have been written by a woman, Harold Bloom enlarges our ideas about ancient Hebrew literature.

[November 22, 1990]

New York Times

John Russell, art critic of the neo-Freudian *Times*, makes the case for getting soundly stewed every time one visits the Republic's great art museums:

Every time we pay a call on those permanent collections, we check on the art. But also—and this may be even more important—we check on ourselves. If the art looks just the same as it did the last time round, there's something wrong with us.

[August 31, 1990]

New Yorker

Proof that this venerable magazine of toney prose is not always anti-American, at least not when it is divinely risible:

"You've been there more than anyone else on earth, anyone in history," Peter says, letting his binoculars drop to his chest. "And you've been such a good protector of the birds. When you arrive the albatrosses should line up, rock forward on their feet, and bow." He rocks onto his toes, angles his arms out to his sides, and makes a stooping half bow. Hiroshi, picking up another part of the courting dance, arches his chest out and his arms back. I add yet another element by kissing my left shoulder, then my right, with arms angled out from my sides. I do not know what passersby make of this scene, but fishermen on small volcanic islands in the Pacific are surely used to all sorts of strange birds. And the castaneting and whinnying we three do next probably doesn't surprise them much, either.

[September 24, 1990]

New York Daily News

New Age culture note for those steatopygic TV devotees capable of remembering all the way back to the glorious days of Waltonian Madness:

On the hit TV series "The Waltons," he was the ultimate, all-American grandfather. But in the early years, before he donned those overalls, Grandpa Walton Will Geer was a committed, political leftie who had a homosexual affair with Harry Hay, today considered the granddaddy of gay activists.

It began in 1933 on a Sunset Blvd. stage where Geer, 30, and Hay, 21, did a play together. "Our glances met during that first meeting and held for a moment too long. My throat went dry, and I knew I'd made a connection," recounts Hay in a new biography, *The Trouble With Harry: Founder of the Modern Gay Movement* (Alyson Publications).

Author Stuart Timmons says Geer introduced Hay to Hollywood's political left and the Communist party before their romance faded. Geer later married. However, Hay still managed to snipe at Geer's wife, Herta Ware, when the actor died in 1974. "I had him first," Hay blurted. To that the mother of Geer's three children retorted, "I had him longest."

[November 13, 1990]

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